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**THE SPELL  
OF THE HOLY LAND**

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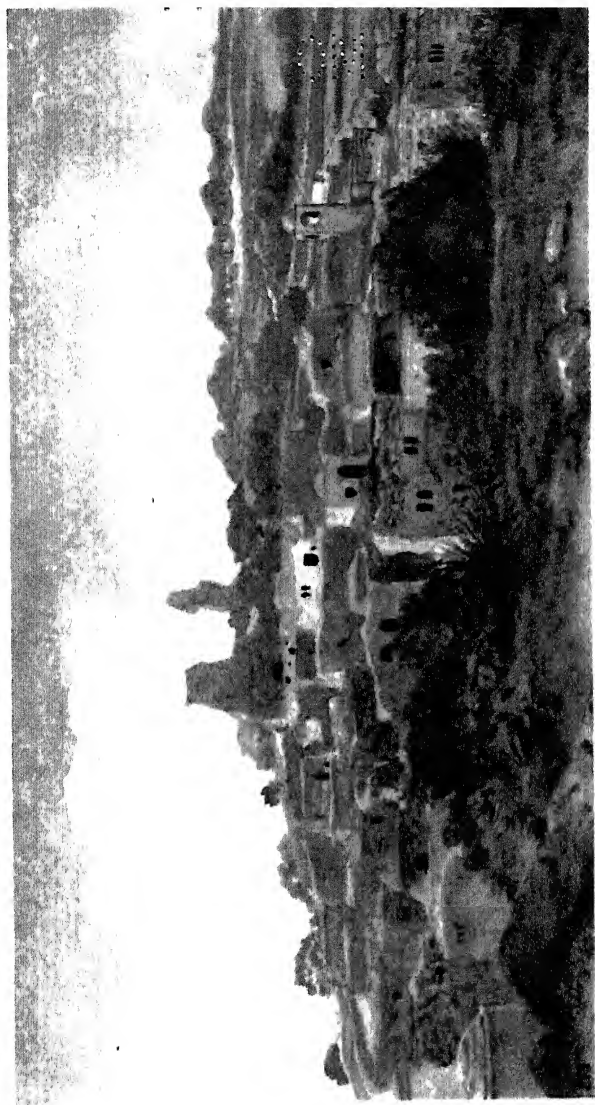
By Archie Bell



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# *The* SPELL *of* THE HOLY LAND

*BY*  
*Archie Bell*



With eight plates in full colour and many  
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**E. M. NEWMAN**

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## FOREWORD

There are two kinds of pilgrims to the Holy Land. Some journey to Palestine from religious motives, while others go because by nature they are wanderers over the face of the earth. It seems only fair to my readers to declare at the outset that I belong to the second class. I wanted to see Palestine because I had been assured that I would find there many things that were new, although this seemed to be something of a paradox, for many scientists and archæologists believe that the northern part of Syria and Palestine possessed a civilization far more ancient than that of Egypt, and that in Baalbek's marble ruins are fragments dating back to the earliest prophets of the Hebrew Bible. Indeed, there is a tradition that the "altar of the Lord," built by the son of Adam and Eve, was the beginning of that holy city. My informants told me that in Baalbek, that hoary city of Baal, I would find a kaleidoscope of colour and novelty which alone would cause enthusiastic impressions of Egyptian Thebes to fade from my mind.

I was told that the stony pathways of the

Judean wilderness were as gloomily attractive as the more distant crags, hills and valleys of Arabia, that beautiful Galilee was comparable to the north of Wales, and that the country round about Damascus was so beautiful that even the Prophet Mahomet, claiming that "man can have but one paradise, and mine is above," denied himself the pleasure of entering that oldest still-inhabited city in the world.

When I first made up my mind to undertake the pilgrimage I naturally began to haunt the libraries, but my last visit was like the first; there was such a mass of information, such a voluminous literature of the Holy Land that I finally became confused and bewildered. Where one writer waxed eloquent another lapsed into monosyllabic prose; what one admired another condemned; where one found unmistakable evidences of authenticity in sacred places another saw only the rampant spirit of commercialism, and claimed that "exact spots" were located solely for the purpose of extracting money from credulous tourists. About the only thing upon which they all agreed was that every one who likes to travel should go to Palestine, but even on the subject of the comfort or discomfort of the tour they offered many different opinions.

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One made the reader imagine that the Holy Land was intersected by splendidly paved highways, bordered by hedges, olive trees or stately palms; and claimed that, while the days might be hot and disagreeable, the nights were beautiful sapphire hours during which the tourist sat on some balcony, over the marble pillars of which jasmine vines were trailing.

The next writer declared that not even the roads of internal China are in a more neglected state than those of Palestine, and dwelt upon the departed glory of architectural beauties, the chalky whiteness of the parched and barren acres where once the date palm flourished and the weary pilgrim found rest in the shade of the mimosa tree.

I read and read, and the more I read the less I felt I knew about Palestine. My reading had but one effect; I wanted more and more to go and see for myself, and I gave up the attempt to learn from others what awaited me in Palestine, and the result was that, before I undertook the cruise that would bring me to a country holy to three religions of the world, I closed all books except the Bible, which I found to be the most authentic and illuminating guide-book of all. I declined to be prejudiced in advance by what I read or what I heard. I



said to myself that Palestine could be neither as enjoyable nor as disagreeable as it had been painted by the writers of the world.

What is sometimes called "Palestine fever" took hold of me; I was never so anxious to see anything in my life. There was something in the old names, Jericho, Jordan, Jerusalem, that fascinated me. And I promised myself, having at least received a warning from the books that I had scanned, that I would not even permit religious prejudices to alter what I thought was my open-mindedness. I was going in search of impressions and I did not want to take with me any that I had previously formed.

I liked to recall that I was a newspaper reporter, one of that splendid, yet much libelled clan, to which Balzac and Zola belonged; and I was glad of the fact that I was taking my typewriter on my cruise over seas for the purpose of tapping its keys as I had tapped them for many years in a newspaper office. I did not wish to wait until I reached home again to jot down my experiences and impressions, for I wanted them to be those of the day rather than carefully twisted sentences tempered by comparison with the things to which I was accustomed.

Thus this book. It is my account of many

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happy days in Palestine. It assumes to be nothing more. It will be obvious to him who reads the first page that it records the impressions of one who cares no more for theology than for agriculture; and who knows no more of one than of the other. I admit that I was as much interested when Aaron Aaronson of Zammarin showed me the results of his experiments in growing Algerian and Tunisian wheat, and explained to me that its introduction into the dry lands of Palestine might completely alter the almost desperate condition of the poor farmers, as I was when my dragoman took me to a wildly beautiful ravine and told me that there Elijah was fed by the ravens. I was more moved by the architectural sublimity of the Mohammedan Mosque of Omar at Jerusalem than by the Christian Church of the Nativity at Bethlehem, while such pagan marvels as the Temple of Jupiter at Baalbek, or the Kazneh at Petra, made other heaps of carved stone seem tawdry or insignificant by comparison.

My thrills were not manufactured for me by the canny Mohammedans who guard the holy places, or prepared for me by writers who boast that one who reads their books may stay at home and imagine himself travelling. I

arose each morning and went into the day's experiences absurdly satisfied with my own ignorance of what I was going to see, and purposely plunged into each day with a freedom from schedule that would have been worthy of a coffee-sipping Palestinian. I was looking for calm where all was calm; and I sought excitement where there was excitement. I was in a receptive mood for thrills, but I declined to admit that I felt a thrill simply because other men had been thrilled before me. Thus I had a feeling when the monk unlatched the gate and admitted me to the Garden of Gethsemane that was lacking when another monk told me that an old earthen jar in a church at Cana was the identical jar used by Jesus when He turned water into wine to prevent the embarrassment of the hosts at the wedding.

I believe that one who goes to the Holy Land in anything like the frame of mind in which I approached its ancient hills will find about nine-tenths enjoyment and about one-tenth personal inconvenience. People who insist upon "all the comforts of home," as they know them, should stay at home and let other people do the travelling. Such a plan would be more satisfactory to all concerned.

Nothing contributes more to the pleasure of

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a jaunt into the strange places of the earth than pleasant companionship. With pleasure I noted on the first day that my companion on this voyage was E. M. Newman, the American travel lecturer. After many weeks together, I had greater pleasure in declaring that Newman was the prince of travellers and the best of comrades.

ARCHIE BELL.

CLEVELAND, April 30, 1915.



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# THE SPELL OF THE HOLY LAND

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## CHAPTER I

### TOWARD THE PROMISED LAND

**A**FTER one has been revelling in the joys of Shepherd's and then says good-bye to Cairo and takes the train whose locomotive is pointed eastward, he believes somehow that he has begun a pilgrimage to holy places. There are plenty of things, the first day, to cause him to think that he has started in the wrong direction, if he has selected the Port Saïd route; nevertheless, there is much even on that first day's journey to make him believe that practically every yard of railroad track he covers is "holy ground" to some sect or other, and that he is gradually moving in the direction of Jerusalem, probably the holiest city in the world, because, at the beginning, it was the centre of three of the world's mighty religions.

One sees many fellow passengers, whom he

feels certain are bound for Palestine, but there are also many others, merchants and traders from the four points of the compass, and thousands of people who seemed to be moving about concerned only with the most ordinary affairs of the day and had no thought of a religious pilgrimage. To them, the holy places meant nothing, just as I was to find later that far holier places seemed to mean little beyond financial profit, and the opportunity to gain an unexpected piece of silver from the visitor to those men and women who, since childhood, had lived among ancient ruins or beside rocky pathways where tourists hesitate and pilgrims bend the knee, or, following the Russian peasant custom, implant a fervent kiss. The Coliseum never attracts the eye of the Roman gamin, the Bay of Naples does not demand the attention of the fisherman along its shores on account of its azure, and an Egyptian gentleman seemed fairly typical of men when he assured me with a degree of pride that his young son, who was in the American school at Beirut, produced drawings of men and women that were superior to those carvings and tracings on ancient temples and tombs, which so many people travelled such a long way and spent so much money to see. The people observed between Cairo and Suez are

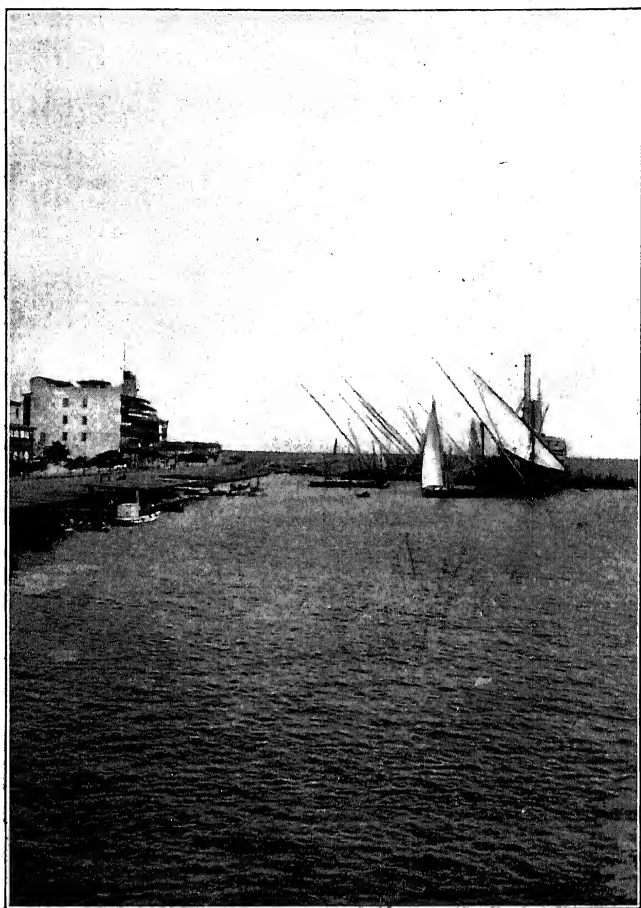
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merely a part of that kaleidoscope of colour into which one plunges immediately after disembarking from a Mediterranean steamer at any Eastern port. They are running about excitedly at the stations, they clamour into the trains and out of the cars at the next station. Or, perhaps, they go on to that great clearing-house, Port Saïd, justly reckoned as the strangest place on the face of the earth, because it is the dumping-place of the nations, and seems to have collected all the driftwood of the great human sea.

There are many ways of entering Palestine. Many steamers run directly to Egypt and there leave their passengers to go overland, and there are Russian steamers which ply between Odessa and all the ports along the way back to Constantinople. There are Greek steamers, Italian steamers, and about every other kind of steamers touching at the most easterly ports of the Mediterranean, so that one has a large collection from which to choose. But perhaps the most convenient way of all—at least for Americans and Englishmen—is to go by way of Egypt. The Russian steamers from Port Saïd are said to be the best—and it is said that they have greatly improved in the last few years—but if these complimentary things be true, it must have been a dismal voyage in the older day, or it must

be so still upon the other lines, for I have rarely seen a more poorly conducted service, and I have never seen such absolute disregard of the comfort of passengers as upon the steamship *Odessa*, which runs from Port Saïd and scatters its passengers all along the route as far as the city from which the steamer takes its name. The tourist agencies "suggest" that one wait for this steamer because it is the cleanest ship, because there are likely to be less poor pilgrims upon it than upon many of the others, and because it is "roomy." But after a journey of one night upon it, one is inclined to the belief that the other ships must be very bad, or that the crew of the *Odessa* were on vacation and left the ship to take care of itself.

One hears on every side that the Germans are penetrating everywhere, that they are gaining control of things in the furthest cities of the world; but along with that intelligence, disquieting to some, also comes the news that the Germans are beginning to operate the hotels in Palestine and Syria and that they are more and more entering into the steamship trade of the Far East, and one is thankful that it is so. They keep good hotels in far-a-way places, they know how to operate steamship lines and they keep things clean.



PORT SAID.





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Somewhere along the route between Egypt and the Red Sea is the route covered by the Children of Israel when they were being led out of bondage. The route is questioned, but perhaps it is not very far from the line of the railroad. The road strikes out much further south than one would imagine, and meets the Suez Canal about twenty-five miles south of its northern terminus, so that the train runs along the banks of white sand and permits passengers to witness the rather unusual sight of ocean-going vessels seeming to be plowing along in the sands of the desert. Leaving Cairo in the early morning, one arrives at Port Saïd in the middle of the day, and learns with pleasure that the departing steamer will lift its anchor about four o'clock in the afternoon. That is as long as any one should care to remain in Port Saïd.

Some places acquire an evil reputation and do not seem to deserve it, but the old saying that "where there's fire there's smoke," seems to have been founded on truth. Kipling says: "There is iniquity in many parts of the world and vice in all, but the concentrated essence of all iniquity in many parts and all the vices of all the continents, find themselves at Port Saïd." Richard Harding Davis once visited the place and wrote that he told his guide to show him the

worst thing in the city, which he fancied would of necessity be the worst thing in the world. As a result, he was taken to a beer hall, or something of the sort. But Davis should come again and observe that Kipling was nearer to the truth, although the former's observations were made at a much more recent date.

Colon, at the northern terminus of the Panama Canal, had a reputation for vice, which seems to be gradually disappearing, although I have seen things there that would not be tolerated in the deepest pit of Hades; but Colon is a small and somewhat neglected town, considering its importance in world geography, for people will doubtless go on thinking of it as the Atlantic terminus of the Panama Canal, rather than the American town that actually borders on the waterway in the Canal Zone.

Port Saïd is a big city and has all the earmarks of being a prosperous and growing city.

The Suez Canal and its builder are perhaps of timely interest to Americans at the present time, because the same man who built it attempted to do at Panama what he did here. He was the divider of continents and the joiner of oceans. But he failed dismally at Panama, and for very obvious reasons. His task here was a much different one. The Suez Canal

is but a deep ditch through the desert; the Panama Canal is a mighty cleft through a range of mountains that form the backbone of continents. But De Lesseps was a man much honoured for his achievements at Suez. He was fêted by the world. The Khedive Ismail spent hundreds of millions on the project, it being supposed that he squandered about twenty-one million dollars at the festivities that marked the opening, when the Empress Eugénie was a "national guest," when Verdi's "Aïda" was performed for the first time on any stage, and when palaces and bridges were built for the convenience of royal guests, many of whom stayed but a few days. In fact, the entire cost of the "ditch" has been placed at four hundred million dollars, about half of which is said to have been expended in a manner that had nothing to do with the actual operation of completing the canal project.

Ismail is now immortalized by a little desert town on the Canal where the railroad turns north. De Lesseps died a dishonoured man, and he is remembered here only by a statue at the end of the breakwater that reaches a protecting arm into the Mediterranean. The Canal remains, but it is under the control of a government to which De Lesseps and Ismail did not be-

long. They are almost forgotten away off here at Suez; and if that be true here, the scene of their activity, it is more true elsewhere. Verily, memory of man is short at best, even for men of achievement, fame and glory.

One already begins to feel the polite "graft" of the Turkish officials before he leaves Port Saïd, bound for Syria, Palestine or Turkish dominions east of Egypt. In most instances it is petty and annoying, sometimes quite absurd, as for instance, when we arrived at the pier, ready to be taken out to the steamer by lighter, for these Mediterranean steamers anchor out in the channel and do not tie up at Port Saïd.

"Fifteen cents for certificate of infection," said an official, who stopped us at a little wooden gate. He spoke English, and he was proud of it. Perhaps those were not his words exactly, but that is how we interpreted them, for he led us into a dingy room, where many Arabs sat smoking their hookas, a room that looked as if it might communicate any disease, and after we had been detained for some time and answered a number of silly questions, we were told that for the simple fee of fifteen cents we would be allowed to land at Jaffa with a clean certificate of health, at least we would be given a piece of paper with Arabic characters upon it which we

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were told would show that we left Egypt in perfect bodily health.

I assured the official that I never felt better in my life, and that I would run the chances of "looking healthy" when I arrived at Jaffa the following day. But perhaps the official knew that I was sailing upon a Russian steamer, and, any way, he did not admire my presumption in questioning his authority, and as Newman remarked that he was once held up at Jaffa for four days in quarantine and he thought fifteen cents for an official would be a cheap manner of providing against a repetition of such contingencies, we deposited our fee, hoped that it would "do some good" and received a torrent of abuse from the gold-braided and fezzed gentleman who thought we were impertinent.

Once aboard the steamer we soon found that instead of being quite free from "pilgrims," as the agencies had promised us, it seemed that all the world had suddenly decided to make a pilgrimage to holy places. The lower decks were swarming with Mohammedans bound for Mecca—those gentlemen who notoriously convey most of the plague and diseases that creep into Europe. The upper decks were swarming with pilgrims bound for Jerusalem and Damascus.

We had been promised de luxe staterooms,

and we found that *de luxe* was merely a matter of size. The rooms were dirty, and were provided with rough woollen blankets instead of the usual bed clothes. The food was served in many courses, and served by stewards who wore white gloves; but it was uneatable, so we contented ourselves with fruit and pistachio nuts. It is a trial, this beginning of a trip to the Holy Land, but, in the morning, there were bright skies when we looked out and saw the city of Jaffa. It was a good omen, for more comfortable and agreeable experiences were close ahead. The German hotel-keeper is in the Holy Land, and one hopes for the benefit of future pilgrims that he has come to stay.

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## CHAPTER II

### JAFFA, JUDEA AND JONAH

**T**HERE are so many references in the Bible to famine in Palestine and the journey of the patriarchs of sacred history to the land of Egypt for grain, that one does not expect the first view of Palestine that greets his eyes, if he come by the Mediterranean steamer that lands at Jaffa. It is true that "one swallow does not make a summer," and that the luxuriant growth of at least semi-tropical trees around Jaffa, the great green fields of grain that stretch away into the plain of Sharon, or the verdant appearance of everything by comparison with Egypt, after one leaves the fertile Nile country, do not indicate what lies beyond the towering Judean hills. Perhaps there are rocks and barren fields beyond, but one thinks not of them in making his first impression of Palestine. After Egypt, Jaffa seems like a flower garden nestled among great orange gardens and fig-trees upon which the morning sun is shining as the steamer approaches the dangerous reefs



which form its harbour, for although it is the seaport of Jerusalem, and has been since at least the time of Solomon, little or nothing has been done to make any improvement on its natural conditions.

"I understand that for certain concessions near Jerusalem, my government is about to remove the reefs at Jaffa," said a young French engineer in my hearing at a hotel one night in Damascus.

"Oh, it's the French government now, is it?" commented an elderly native. "When I was a boy it was the English. My grandfather says the French talked about it in the days of Napoleon. Probably Solomon had a similar idea. That has been the pet project of somebody for more centuries than you are years old—and the reefs still remain."

These reefs, like Port Saïd, have a bad reputation. Many a pilgrim bound for the Holy Land has been carried along past Jaffa, because the sea was too high to permit of a landing. The ship anchors some distance from the city, and soon dozens of rowboats, manned by excellent seamen, arrive to take baggage and passengers through the narrow passage made by the reefs. If the sea is rolling high, it is said to look like a des-

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perate situation as one approaches the small gap in the rocks; but the little boats do not venture out when there is danger—passengers may be assured of that—and probably the horrors of this experience have been greatly exaggerated by tourists who come this way. The first missionary who sent a detailed account of Niagara Falls to his friends in France, declared that the water seemingly fell from the clouds. He had viewed the cataract from below and his report proves that he should have climbed the bank before writing, just as many of the stories of travellers who landed at Jaffa prove that they should have waited for a change in the weather.

The sea was glassy when I arrived, and our little boats, manned by six stalwart rowers, made a quick slide for the shore. The Turkish custom-house service of Jaffa seems to have been greatly maligned, like everything else Turkish. A very polite official looked over our luggage, upon which we had been obliged to make excessive deposits and pay heavy duty in the land of the Pharaohs, and the chalk-mark that gave everything the right to pass freely through Palestine was given the different pieces in a very short time. Yet most of the guide-books unblushingly warn unsuspecting pilgrims of the graftings and petty thievings in the cus-

toms at Jaffa. One soberly warns passengers that they must expect to approach the official and make liberal gratuities before they may expect to be allowed to proceed at all. Another hints that while it may not be necessary, it is advisable to hand the examining officers a coin, as the formality is likely to facilitate movement, and perhaps this latter advice is not amiss.

When one wishes anything like speed in Eastern countries, he must pay for it. Sometimes, after he has paid, he will get an Oriental's idea of Occidental rush and haste, but, often enough, it is impossible at any price. Usually a small gratuity is sufficient, however, and one is well repaid by observing the results of satisfaction from the recipient of a few pennies. At least, one may never fear that he is offering money to an official or layman who may resent the action. The Turk in uniform will smile when he receives cigarette money, and seems to be happy when he receives a coin that would purchase a glass of his favourite beverage. Approach a pedestrian in the streets, inquire the road to a point of interest, and, likely as not, he will escort you to the spot you want to visit. He may be well dressed, apparently a man of business, and he may attempt to chat familiarly, inquire as to the state of your health, and as-

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certain your birthplace and destination, and, to prove conclusively that he is interested, he likes to accept some little "souvenir" of your happy meeting.

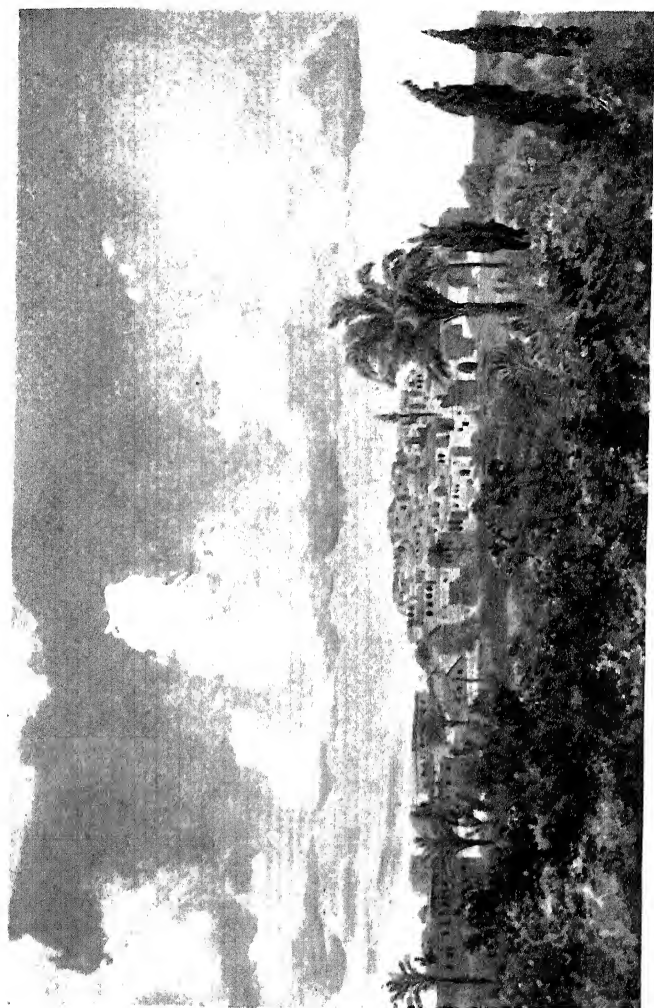
There was nothing about our arrival at Jaffa that was not as easy and comfortable as an arrival at any American port. A short drive brought us to our hotel, where a jolly old Armenian greeted us in the name of an American consular agent—who runs the hotel—and we were conducted to rooms that quickly reminded us of Fra Elbertus and East Aurora. There's something prosaic in being assigned to No. 6 or No. 25, as such poetically minded inn-keepers as the Fra have discovered, so one finds himself quite comfortably installed in a room that bears the name of a celebrity of the land. At East Aurora, perhaps it is Emerson. In Jaffa, I found myself in room Jeremiah, for mine host has named his rooms after the prophets, and as one looks over several apartments to take his choice, he finds the necessity of choosing between Daniel, Hosea, Moses and others. Jeremiah was shining clean, had a fine private balcony overlooking a tropical garden and gave satisfaction on all accounts.

Most of the tourists and pilgrims who come to Palestine seem almost to overlook Jaffa. They

arrive in the morning, visit two or three places that are mentioned in the Bible, and they hurry to Jerusalem by the afternoon train, in their zeal to reach the Holy City, apparently forgetting that Jaffa is one of the oldest cities in the country, that it has played a prominent part in world's affairs, and that it is worth more of a visit.

It is a strange place, thoroughly Oriental, and presenting about all of the street characteristics, although perhaps on a somewhat smaller scale, that one would find anywhere in Syria and Palestine. It has been dealing with the outside world for centuries, but its native life does not seem to have become affected. There are many narrow streets in which the merchants have their tiny shops, which are always worth a visit, and these seem to be blocked with small stools upon which crowds of men are sitting smoking their narghilas, bargaining and gesticulating.

Jaffa is the port from which Jonah sailed on the famous cruise that gave him immortality, because he was swallowed by a whale. It was on the rocks around which we twisted our way into the harbour of Jaffa that Andromeda was chained that she might be devoured by a sea monster, but was rescued by Perseus—an event that has appealed to the imagination of artists





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and poets. There is a legend that Jaffa was a city before the flood that destroyed the world, and good Mohammedans will explain that Jaffa was spared; but even not accepting the theory that the waters did not cover it, it is quite certain that it has been a garden spot ever since the flood, and the filth in certain sections of the city bears eloquent proof that there has been no general cleaning up since Noah's barge rested on Ararat.

The nations of the world have always contended for possession of it, for through it in the oldest times went the traffic of the world. The cedar from Lebanon that was used in the construction of Solomon's temple at Jerusalem arrived here for its rather difficult journey fifty miles up the hills to the capital. The Pharaohs, Greeks, Romans and Turks have besieged it many times, and it has had a great fighting reputation from the earliest times, withstanding sieges by Pompey, Saladin and even Napoleon Bonaparte, and it was defended by them. Napoleon is said to have caused the sands to flow with blood from Turkish soldiers. Josephus says fully eighty thousand people perished here of the plague at one time. Here Peter lodged and performed a miracle. Here lived Dorcas, a "woman of good works," whose name is borne



by so many philanthropic societies in America and England. And it is a city of about fifty thousand inhabitants. Yet most of the Palestine tourists overlook these facts and hurry along. But it seemed to us to be a city worthy of a more lengthy visit, so Newman took Hosea and I clung to Jeremiah for two days, which our host assured us was a "very long visit for Americans in Jaffa."

We found a sentimental interest attaching itself to the first "sight" and "site" in the Holy Land, something actually mentioned in the Bible, but, after a brief discussion of the subject, it dawned on us simultaneously that there were sights and sites at every turn of every road, so abandoning any further thought of "methodical" visits to interesting places, we merely went forth into the sunshine each morning and kept going until night, never leaving a place until we had seen what we wanted to see, and having no fixed time for arrival at another place.

First of all we went to the spot now marked by an ornate Greek church which is supposed to occupy the site of the house of Dorcas. Most of the authorities agree that the spot is authentic. The Bible says that Peter was called from Lydda near by and raised Dorcas from the dead, after which he went into the city and tarried

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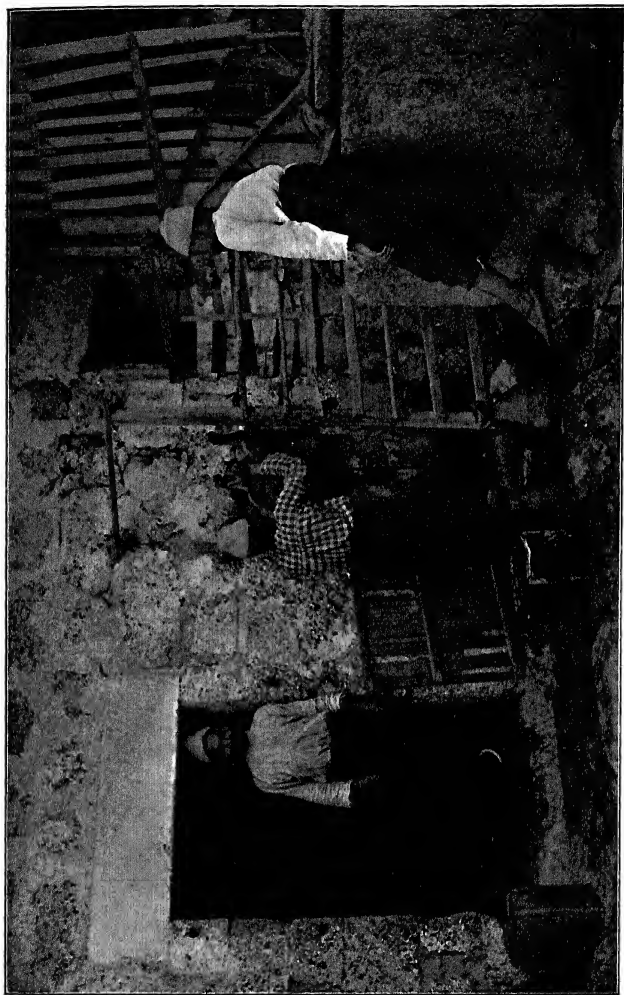
with Simon the Tanner. So we took the same road, which is now in a wretched state, although it is much used by the caravans that come this way from all the southern countries with rich fruits and grain for shipment from Jaffa. The road is bordered for miles with a big tall prickly pear hedge, some of the stalks of which appear to be a century old. This cactus forms an almost impenetrable barrier from the highway for the splendid orange groves, almond and fig orchards and fields of grain, which should barely be safe from the drivers of camels, who seem to be passing one way or the other in an endless procession.

After the site of the home of Dorcas had been purchased, an excavation was made and what is believed to have been her tomb was found in a natural cave. The grave is covered with ancient Roman mosaic and has now become a shrine. The walk to it is bordered with olive and mulberry trees, the former loaded with ripe fruit and the latter just in bloom during our visit. It is a peaceful place, a beautiful garden surrounding the premises and, while tilled for purely commercial purposes, giving the whole place the appearance of having been kept up by landscape gardeners. The large church contains many paintings representing the life of

Dorcas, and the passages of Scripture which relate to her, and to Peter's visit to her house, are painted upon the walls in many languages, so that all who visit the place may read them, and be duly impressed by the importance of the spot, which has no absolute proof, but as no other spot has proof so convincing it is customarily accepted even by those who seem to make a specialty of being expert doubters.

We tried to follow as closely as possible Peter's route back into the city to the house of Simon, which is now a one-room structure in a crowded part of the city on the sea front. Outside there is a big stone basin, and a well, which is so old that tradition says it is the same used by Simon for his tanning operations. An outside staircase leads to the roof of the dwelling, upon which there is a small lighthouse. On this roof it is said that Peter fell into a trance and "saw the heavens opened and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet, knit at the four corners and let down to the earth, wherein were all manner of four-footed beasts of the earth, wild beasts and creeping things and fowls of the air." It was the beginning of Peter's missionary work, as recorded in the Book of Acts.

Out of the large population, the great per-



HOUSE OF SIMON THE TANNER, JAFFA.



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centage are Moslems, with a comparatively small number of Jews and Christians, although Christianity was early introduced into Jaffa, as we find in Acts ix: 36 and so forth. The bazars present a lively picture, teeming with life from all of Asia Minor, and bringing together so many races and languages that it would seem to be a difficult matter for one to understand the other. Here are also many desert men, and it is to them, perhaps, that the prevalence of ophthalmia may be traced, doubtless caused by the glare of the sun on the sands. We saw more blind people here than in any of the cities recently visited, where blindness seems to afflict such a large proportion of the community. The missionaries here chiefly devote their energies to free treatment of this disease, and are said to be doing a noble work, on the theory that bodies should be healthy and perfect before souls may be saved.

There are trees and twittering birds in the courtyards of all of the houses of the Jaffa streets, but they are dirty with a true Oriental disregard for cleanliness of any sort. There are no sewers, and all kind of filth is dumped into the narrow highway, so that even to-day the native city is considered a most unhealthy place in which to live. Turkish citizens pay a tax of about a dollar apiece a year for the improve-

ment of the highways and their upkeep; but nobody seems to know where the money goes—certainly not on the roads. Even the Turkish postoffices are not to be trusted, so there are three or four postoffices established by other countries. Postage stamps affixed to postal cards that are in any way offensive to the government are destroyed with the cards. Stamps of larger denomination are usually steamed from the letters and sold again, so that letters never reached their destination. Before I knew this I purchased several stamps, found them all curled up and with no gum on their backs, whereupon I received the explanation, and was advised to affix Austrian, British, or German stamps to letters and place them in Austrian, British or German mail boxes anywhere in the Holy Land if I expected them to be delivered in America.

The hotel room Jeremiah has a small balcony that runs out over a garden that one might expect to find in the tropics. Tall palms reach their fronds around the railing, bougainvillæa in a mass of purple bloom forms a canopy, and tall trumpet trees raise their great bell-shaped flowers high into the air, leaving only a small peep at the distant view; but quite enough to cause the traveller who sits in the shade and

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quiet for a few moments to conjure any number of pictures of the departed past, any number of romantic episodes in the world's history that have taken place out there beyond the verdant hillsides and the rocky shore.

A pious monk, Father Fabri, who made the pilgrimage from Jaffa to Jerusalem in the fifteenth century, told a few things about that shore that are quite as remarkable as the biblical story of Jonah and his experience with a big fish. Father Fabri says the shore was haunted by a big fish with a beak fashioned like an auger, and that unless he were driven away from a ship he would bore a hole through it and devour the passengers who were unable to look it straight in the eye with a steady gaze. Even Pliny said that the bones of one of these fish were brought to Rome and that they were forty feet in length, while the ribs were larger than those of an Indian elephant, and it is not recorded that this splendid old chronicler retracted the statement before Vesuvius made it impossible for him to do so.

Fortunately, however, these fish are gone and no longer haunt the Jaffa shore, but it is probable that something of the kind was once found hereabouts, and it may have been this creature with a beak which swallowed Jonah, and it may



have been the same which was to have devoured Andromeda if she had not been rescued by Perseus, because there are so many historical references to the terrible monster.

From the balcony one not only looks out at the sea and thinks of the wonders of the sea, but it is also possible to look over near Lydda, the town in which St. George, the patron saint of England, was born, and the town from which Peter was called when Dorcas died. To-day it is a small village, not unlike other Palestine villages, chiefly inhabited by Mohammedans. The Cathedral of St. George has been turned into a mosque, which has been the fate of so many Christian edifices in the Holy Land.

Just beyond lies Ramleh, the village where lived Joseph of Arimathea, the rich merchant who offered his tomb for the burial of Jesus; and Modin, the residence of Simon Maccabeus; Askalon in which Herod the Great was born, and Gaza, the home of Samson and the site of the Temple of Dagon, which he pulled down. All of the surrounding landscape is full of stories of the exploits of the famous giant, and somewhere within visual range was the field where David slew another giant, the mighty Goliath. Most of the places that occupy such a thrilling place in the Old Testament have entirely disap-

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peared; thus Gath, the home of the giants, was destroyed before Christ and has never been rebuilt. But Gaza remains and is still quite a town. It stood where it stands before Abraham, and down through the ages it has been contended over by the nations, because it is the gateway to Africa and Asia, a central trading-place for the Bedouins for at least five thousand years. When Dagon, the fish-god, was overthrown, the Greek pantheon was adopted, but after the Crusades, when it was drenched with blood, it became Moslem and has remained so ever since.

Looking out over the fertile Plain of Sharon, off into the Judean hills, and contemplating what has passed there, I was seized by a desire to leave the balcony, to go into the gardens beyond the city of Jaffa, and, if possible, to talk with the natives, to see them as they are, which, no doubt, is as they have been from times long before our era. So I came down from the flowery perch, strangely suggestive of a hotel window on the Riviera or in southern California, and started out beyond the city, where there is so much filth and poverty. Passing along muddy streets I suddenly came upon good roads, a general cleanliness and air of prosperity that I had not noted elsewhere in the East. There were pretty cottages set among little gardens in which

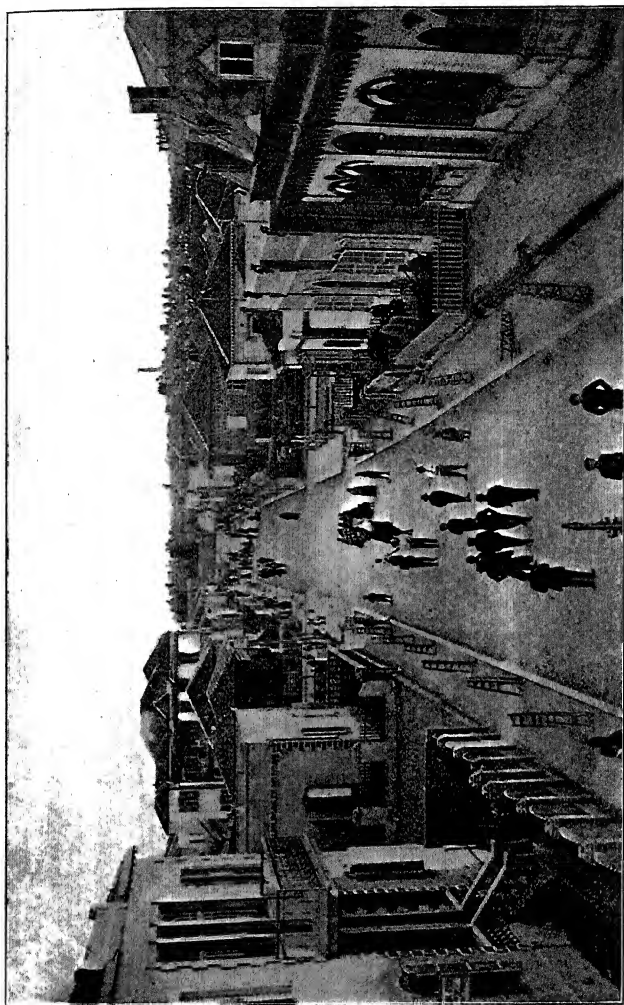
great red geraniums and other flowering plants gave a picture of homeliness that is rare in Oriental countries. Here suddenly was more the Orient of Occidental poetry, music and art than the Orient of reality—the Orient that one prefers to imagine without disquieting actualities.

A man passed me and turned back. "Pardon me, are you an American?" he asked. When I replied in the affirmative, he said: "I also am from America, Hartford, Connecticut, but this is now my home."

"Jaffa?" I asked.

"Tell Aviva," he corrected. "We couldn't live in Jaffa, for it is too dirty down there. You know this is one of the Jewish colonies, one of the latest of the lot. We are very happy here, and while we still have a warm spot in our hearts for America, and my children continue to speak in English at home—I am not so certain that I want them to forget it—this is our home, where we belong, and we do not expect to return to America."

He passed along, and after walking along pretty boulevards, all lined with stone cottages or more pretentious residences, I came to the large school building, and upon inquiry was ushered into the office of Dr. A. Ruppin, who is the



GENERAL VIEW OF TELL AVIVA.



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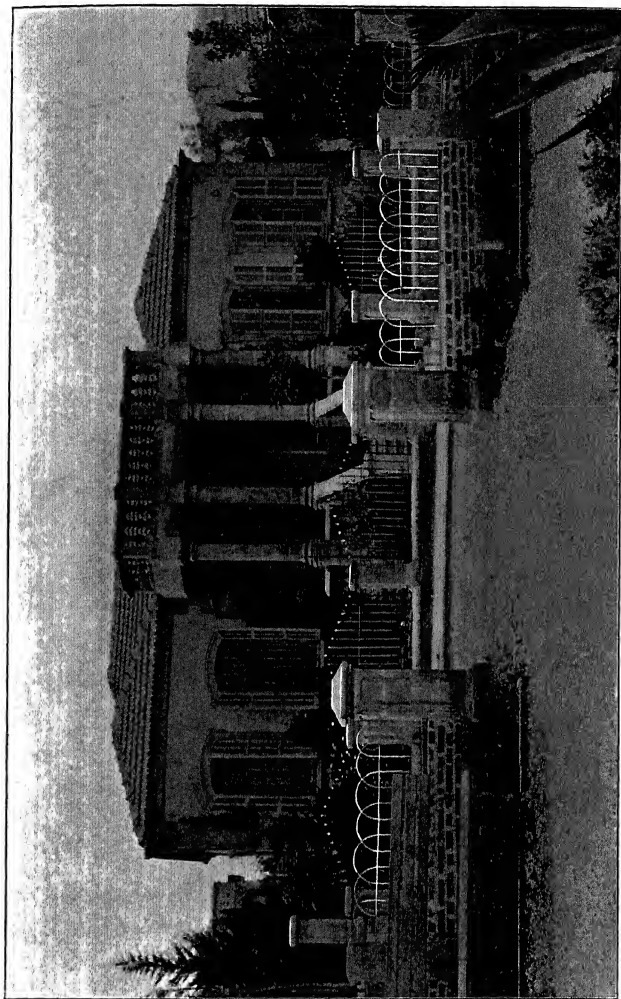
head of the colony. He sat at a desk in a large office building where dozens of clerks and secretaries were carrying on the work of the colony. I watched them come and go, heard them speak, and saw much of them about their daily life, and I am certain that no native section of the country in Palestine, Syria and Egypt offers such a splendid class of people. Most of them came from Russia, and when they arrived they were poor, terribly poor. But they thirst for education and improvement. They are now well dressed, clean and tidy. They look as well as the average Americans upon the streets of an American city; and this is a striking contrast to what they were when they arrived, and the other people who jostle with them on the streets of Jaffa.

“Perhaps the Zionist movement is misunderstood in foreign countries,” said Dr. Ruppin. “It should be remembered, first of all, that we are not striving to form a state. This country is our home. We want to revive and maintain the ancient Jewish culture, which is a thing distinct and apart from the culture of other nations. Our people go to America and absorb the culture of the Americans. The same thing is true in Germany, England or elsewhere. But they are not Jews in the cultural sense of the word. For

this reason, we conduct our classes in the schools in the Hebrew language, and we retain our ancient religion in its ancient purity and its home country. This colony is somewhat different from the others. Our people are not farmers, for the greater part, but undertake other lines of work. They are merchants in the city of Jaffa, they are doctors, lawyers and architects and contractors. Our colony, unlike some of the others, is self-supporting, and we are growing rapidly.

“We took the property that you see here from the natives, when it was a sandy waste, and that was only a few years ago. Look at it and its gardens now! Here we are the examples of better living, the real people of culture and looked up to as examples; and that is not true to the same extent in any other country. We have room for about ten thousand people, when our lands are developed; but at the present time we have difficulty in building as rapidly as houses are requested. Over sixty residences have been put up in the last year and they have become occupied immediately.”

I sat beside the office window and looked around. There were big dwellings and smaller ones, but each was beautiful. There was the appearance of real luxury in some places.



TYPICAL HOME OF A ZIONIST, TELL AVIVA.





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Turkish rugs were suspended from the balconies in the Oriental manner, and the sound of pianos issued from many of the houses. Over across the street some one was playing a Chopin nocturne, a group of Jewish women were sitting upon a balcony employed with fancy work. The children streamed out of the school building with their books under their arms, and they were healthy and happy. They sat down in the park and chatted. They were contented, and perhaps even grateful. Some of them had arrived in Palestine from Russia with their goods and chattels in a handkerchief. Now they were receiving the chance to become men and women. They showed that they appreciated the opportunity.

One of the recent arrivals at Tell Aviva from Russia was Mendel Beilis, who underwent imprisonment and a trying ordeal of torture, charged with a ritual murder. His case attracted the attention of the world and the public clamour doubtless largely influenced the Russian government in releasing him. I called upon him in his little white cottage, where he was sitting on the veranda surrounded by his children. He politely consented to talk, but declared that he did not want to talk about the awful days and events in Russia. It had all undermined his

health, and he said that he was too weak even yet to fully realize that it was all over and that he had reached a haven of rest—Palestine. He said an American publisher gave him six thousand dollars for his story of his life, which he gladly accepted, because he needed money for his family. He said that fabulous offers reached him from American vaudeville agents to visit America and lecture, but that he would not “trade” in the sufferings of the Jewish people and did not want to be a “hero.” He is a modest and rather intelligent man in appearance, very polite, and as happy as a man could be who had passed through his trying experience. He said that Palestine is the place for Jews who desire to find contentment, and that it was proving a haven of rest for him, as it would for others who could come here, under the new conditions. Formerly a Jew could not own property in Palestine, but under the Young Turks there are new laws that are rapidly being taken advantage of by Zion colonists.

## CHAPTER III

### ARIMATHEA'S IMMORTAL MERCHANT

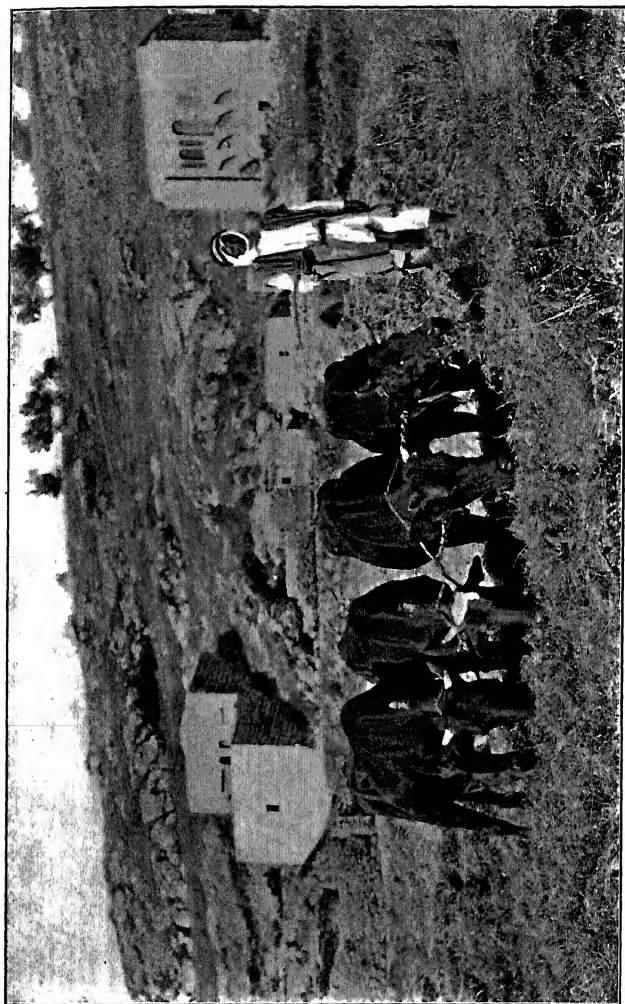
**W**E were so pleased with Tell Aviva, the new Zionist colony near Jaffa, that we were advised to drive to Ramleh, the ancient Arimathea, whence came Joseph, the merchant who offered his tomb for the burial of Jesus, and take the afternoon train from there for the Holy City, for this would afford us the opportunity of visiting Richon le Zion, one of the most famous of all the colonies in Palestine.

Accordingly, early in the morning, we left Jaffa in a three-horse ark, here called a carriage, and soon found ourselves bumping along over a frightful roadway in the Plain of Sharon. The Bible is full of references to the hosts of chariots that dashed along these roads, and as chariots are supposed to have attained quite a good speed, it is just likely that the roadways were better in those days. There are plenty of evidences that once they were paved, for big blocks of stone often enough protrude themselves even

now, but beyond each block of pavement there is likely to be a rut a couple of feet in depth. Camels, donkeys and pedestrians pick their way along these places and even venture off to the side of the road into the fields, so that the path is constantly changing; but not so with the "carriages." The drivers seem to have only one desire in life and that is to deposit their passengers at their destination, so they whip their animals and go bounding along over stones and through mudholes, dragging vehicles behind them.

But the unpleasant experiences thus met with cannot cause one to forget the beautiful landscape on either side of the road. The fields were full of ripened grain as we passed along, and hosts of harvesters were cutting it and tying it into little bundles about as large as their wrists. In other fields, people were threshing by driving four cows around in a circle and winnowing the grain by tossing it into the air with a big wooden fork. Girls and women were sitting around on the ground picking up the kernels and putting them into big hampers. It was doubtless the same operation that existed here in patriarchal times. The people do not seem to care to change.

Our dragoman called attention to the fact that



THRESHING IN PALESTINE.



the grain was not cut closely in the corners, although some of the fields were so small that the owners seemed to need every kernel of grain. The Jews were commanded to leave the grain in the corners for widows to harvest, and it was their custom not to reap too carefully that the poor might come to the fields and glean as did Ruth. Now most of the peasants are Mohammedans, but they follow the same rules and customs. The widow may go into a prosperous farmer's field and cut the wheat in the corners; and the poor may glean. And, more, they may bring their little bundles to the owner and he will see to it that their grain is threshed out with his own. The survival of the custom among the people of an ancient enemy, as the Mohammedan prefers to consider himself, as opposed to all who do not incline the knee to Mecca, is the more remarkable because while many of Mahomet's laws and preachments were directly borrowed from the Jews, the Prophet was silent in this matter, and Mohammedans are guilty of following a Jewish injunction, a thing seemingly impossible on the face of it to one who has observed Moslemism in its daily life and routine practices.

The ditches by the roadway were dotted with big splotches of crimson red, from the beds of



wild poppies, which by many people are supposed to be the real "rose of Sharon" so frequently referred to in the Scriptures. The highway was full of traffic, long trains of camels bringing their stuff to market, or returning home from Jaffa after having deposited their wares at the seaport.

We passed several stout men in flowing robes, seated on little donkeys scarcely large enough to hold them. I remarked that these looked like the pictures I had seen of "The Good Samaritan." The dragoman laughed and said that they were anything but Good Samaritans, because they were Mohammedan farmers. We passed many boys driving heavy carts on which were perched big barrels of wine. This wine was from Richon le Zion, toward which we were driving, but they were not colonists who were bumping along over the road on the bulky carts. Why perform such labour when Syrian boys and men may be employed to do it at such ridiculously small wages? It is said that it was this tendency to have all the manual labour performed by the native peasants that prompted Rothschild to withdraw some of the support to the colonists in the earlier day. Many of the Russian peasants who came here practically penniless, through his bounty quickly acquired

enough money so that they felt they could remain at home and rest, while the real labour of their fields could be performed for them. But many of these things have now been adjusted to the satisfaction of every one concerned, and it is believed that a new era is just dawning for the Jews in Palestine that will place the entire Zionist movement in a different light before the world.

A little over twenty years ago Baron Edmond Rothschild, of Paris, undertook Jewish colonization schemes in Palestine, largely as an experiment. First of all, I believe, about ten thousand Jews were brought here from Roumania and parts of Europe in which they had remained farmers. It is said that about a decade ago the baron pronounced his schemes a failure and said that they had cost him something like ten million dollars. He was here recently, however, and is said to have expressed his delight at present conditions and to have said that many of his fondest dreams had now been fully realized. The question is often asked why Jews who are so well off in the other countries of the world should care to come to Palestine, where there is, at present, a rather crude social life, few amusements and not many of the luxuries to which they are ac-

customed in England and America. The answer seems to be that the Jews who have come here are not those who have made a sacrifice to do so, but who have greatly benefited by the "return to Jerusalem" as it is called. The aim has been not to make life more luxurious for those who know its fortune, but to restore here the ancient haven that will make living conditions at least tolerable for the less fortunate brotherhood that has known not even toleration in alien lands.

Sitting on the balcony of the hotel at Richon le Zion, which owes its existence to Rothschild, I was waited upon by a bright young lady who assured me that I must taste the colony wine with my lunch. I asked her if she had been born in Palestine, and she replied that unfortunately she had been born in Russia. She smiled as she told her tragic story, and her face fairly beamed with happiness as she thought that she was now out of danger.

"Palestine is where the Jews belong," she said, "and it is more than that to me, it is a paradise. I saw my brother and my sister murdered at Kiev, where I was a stenographer in a bank, but I escaped just in time. Why, I'd rather do hard labour in Palestine than to have the best position I could find in Russia. I am very happy here as a waitress."

"But yours might have been an isolated case," I suggested.

"On the other hand, my case was typical. You can't imagine the condition of the Jews in Russia. There's a man who has just come from there and—"

She motioned to him and he came over, a little\* old man with a long flowing grey beard and long black coat. After asking him a question or two she interpreted for him.

"I just came here to see for myself," said the man. "Now I am going back and get my family and come here as quickly as I can. Here is the place for the Jews. You cannot imagine how we suffer in Russia, how we are robbed and how we fear. I am in the iron business, but when the police know that I have made a sale, they come to me and demand my money, always threatening that it is necessary for the protection of myself and my family and holding out the suggestion that we may be murdered at any moment. Jews who can afford it have no difficulty in coming here from Russia, but the trouble is that we are not likely to be able to realize on any of our property when we wish to leave. But I shall come quickly. I want the peace of Palestine. This is our paradise."

Afterward, in conversation with other Jews

who have come to this country, I have often heard the expression. "Paradise" seems to be always in their minds when they are attempting to describe their happiness with their life in this country.

"Palestina"—the very name has a musical ring as they pronounce it. Let the scoffers scoff and the agitators grow eloquent in condemnation of Zionism! Many of them do so through ignorance, or as the result of second-hand information. Most of them have never seen Russia. They have not seen the conditions in which their brothers live in the respective countries. They have not heard the harrowing tales of inhuman oppression; and they have not seen the smiling faces of men from whose minds the haunting fear of murder or worse than murder has been dispelled. One of the wealthy Jewish merchants of Moscow admitted privately last year that fully fifty per cent. of his net earnings were taken from him by officials who declared the annual payment was necessary to assure protection for himself and family. And if this be true of a wealthy man of affairs, how much more true of the men in lesser activities! The answer is that they become willing exiles in Palestine, making many sacrifices to reach that country, often being obliged to abandon business

operations in which they have spent their lives, often unable to derive any payment for property, when it becomes known that they are expecting to "return to Jerusalem."

There is much to be proud of in these colonies, and as we visit them, we always find many people anxious to show us around. They have a strong patriotic pride and interest in the accomplishments of the last few years and many of them like to talk of the near future. All believe that the Zionist movement will take a greater impetus from now on, owing to the success of past experiments and failures, because everything has now shaped itself into a working system that is recognized by newcomers and the older residents. It is still made comparatively easy for a Jew to come here and borrow enough money to build his home, support his family and become established in life. The rates of interest upon the capital borrowed are small, and the amounts, while allowed to run for a lengthy period, are usually paid promptly.

Richon le Zion is a prosperous little community. It has not some of the attractive characteristics of Tell Aviva, the roads are not paved and no effort has been made to have such pretentious cottages for the colonists. But their homes and their general mode of life is

about one hundred per cent. better than it was before they came here, and it is now about two hundred per cent. better than that of the Palestine natives, particularly the Mohammedans. Richon has a far reaching fame on account of its wine. The colonists have large vineyards and the latest devices for the pressing of grapes into sparkling juice that is now rapidly finding a great market, particularly in Egypt and southern Europe. Good table wine may be purchased from them for twenty cents a bottle—wine that costs one dollar and fifty cents the bottle in France—and some of the large cellars through which we were escorted by an attendant proved that a tremendous stock of wine is being set aside for future years. If Richon le Zion is prosperous now, what should it become when those rows upon rows of great underground cisterns of aged wine are opened?

We attempted to “tip” our guide through the village and its points of interest, but he politely thanked us and asked us to wait. He entered a house and came out with a sealed collection box to which we were invited to contribute whatever we pleased. We tried to “tip” the man who showed us through the wine cellars. He brought out a similar box. And the same thing was true of the girl who waited

upon us at lunch at the hotel. Nobody accepts gifts of this kind, but all gifts go into a common fund, much of which is used for the hospital fund, which is assuming a considerable figure.

There was a large orange garden bordered by palm-trees, in the centre of the colony. It was owned by Edmond Rothschild, but when he withdrew certain help from the community, because it had reached a prosperous and flourishing condition, he gave the garden to the village. It is now a big park, but in addition, it is managed by a committee and pays a handsome revenue into the colony funds every year. It is said that while Rothschild has spent tremendous sums of money in Palestine, he has never withdrawn a penny. When one colony reaches a substantial basis, he turns the funds into other channels, or starts something new. Of course, if Palestine became as thickly populated as some of the eastern states in America and the Jews were in the majority of the inhabitants, it would be a small "kingdom," not more than one hundred and fifty miles in length from Dan to Beersheba. Over forty-five per cent. of the land is unfit for anything but grazing. But the Jewish people are making much of the remainder of it "blossom like the rose," and the Zionist leaders say that they are only beginning to show what



they will be able to do. At the most prosperous period of the Jewish nation, the population is supposed to have been about three million five hundred thousand, and the Zionists declare that Palestine is again capable of supporting that many people.

At the time of the crucifixion, there was a rich merchant who owned a family tomb at Jerusalem, which he offered for the burial of Jesus Christ, thus gaining immortality for himself. The story of Joseph of Arimathea has appealed to the world ever since he followed the ancient Oriental custom of the rich man offering a burial place to the poor man. The same custom exists to a degree to-day, although it is not carried to just the extremes of the earlier time. Gentlemen of Palestine have always been anxious to be "good"—or to appear to be "good" in the eyes of their fellowmen. Offering one's tomb to the very humble and lowly, or even the disgraced man, shows that the rich man is willing to humiliate himself for the cause of right. I have seen so many cases of the sort, since I came to the Holy Land, so much display and show under the pretence of doing good, such spectacular distribution of alms to blind and filthy beggars by men who lifted their skirts high into the air as they passed along the high-

ways observed by all men, that I have come to wonder just exactly what was the motive that prompted the rich man of Arimathea to offer the use of his family tomb to the Prince of Peace.

Perhaps his motive was right. At any rate, he has had the benefit of the doubt down through the ages. The world speaks tenderly of the man who came forward and permitted the body of Jesus to be taken down from the cross on Calvary and deposited in the rocky cave which had been chiselled for himself and family.

Now it is believed that the exact spot has been located, and pilgrims by thousands kiss the rocky ledges and shelves of the tomb. Great gold and silver lamps are suspended from the dome that surmounts the supposed rock. The priests of the world are constantly swaying their censers before the place, bells chime, and millions of people prostrate themselves, for one of the greatest events in all history happened in that tomb. The rolling-stone, a perfect example of which exists to this day in the tombs of the kings of Judah at Jerusalem, was rolled away, certainly by superhuman power. The disgraced man to whom Joseph had extended a favour after death had risen from the tomb and had proved his assertions concerning immortality. Jesus

Christ passed up the hill and was seen by men after death. He ascended to Heaven from a rocky precipice near by. The founder of a new religion had not only spoken, but he had given all future followers a tangible basis upon which to live on earth that they might live again. He had conquered death, and He demonstrated His power to do so from the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea.

Thus, being in the neighbourhood of the town whence came this Joseph, and where he carried on the business that gave him enough money to have his tomb at Jerusalem, I was interested to go into its bazars and streets to see something of the life there as it is to-day, to see the merchants of Arimathea as they are in modern days, for it is reasonable to assume that they have not changed much in twenty centuries. Things do not change here as they do in other countries. Actual buildings have crumbled to the ground in many instances, whole streets are no more, and whole cities have passed to decay and ruin. But upon the sites of the buildings, streets and cities, new ones have been raised. Doubtless the people remain about the same and retain their ancient customs, altered to a very small degree by the passing of the years or centuries. Men till the soil as they tilled it

in the days when Jesus walked in the fields and plucked the heads of grain on the Sabbath day. They harvest as they harvested when Ruth gleaned in the fields. The threshing-floors are the same, and the men and women who perform the operations are doubtless of the same type, dress the same, live much as they lived then and retain much the same outlook upon life.

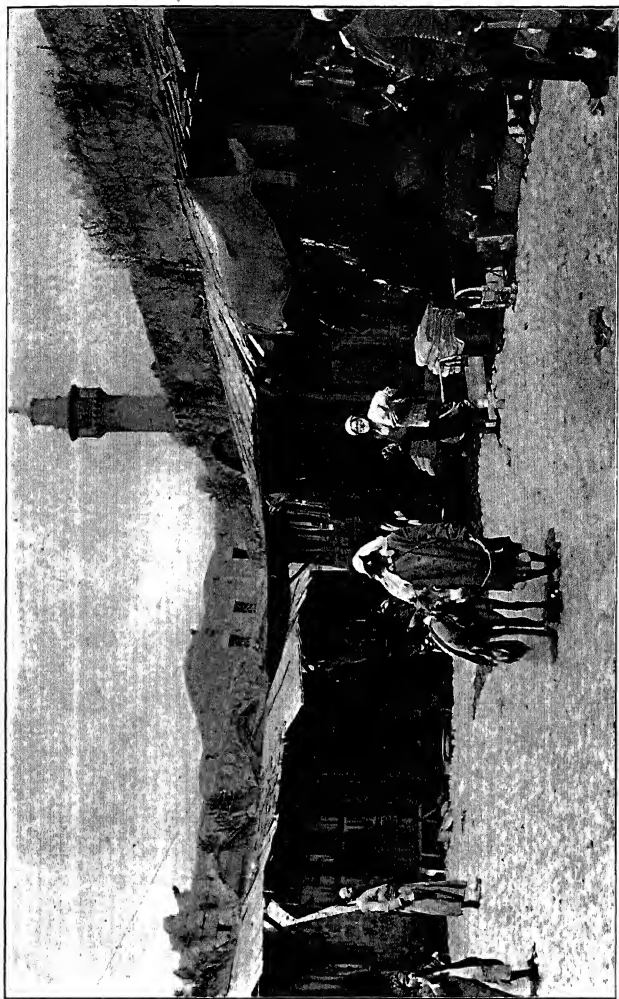
Arimathea is now called Ramleh, and is not a city that attracts many of the pilgrims of the world who journey to the Holy City. It contains about seven thousand inhabitants, nearly a half of whom are Christians of the Greek faith. Schools are maintained by the Church Missionary society, the Franciscans and the Sisters of St. Joseph. There is also a large Armenian convent, a splendid structure that a popular local legend declares is on the exact spot where Joseph had his dwelling.

But the town itself seems to have profited little by its educational advantages. It is very dirty, its inhabitants are evil-appearing citizens, and scantily-dressed children who swarm in its narrow streets are dirty, and as they are seen lying around in shady corners on the pavement they look more like the youngsters in the worst tenement districts of London or New York than the children of fairly well-to-do parents. For

as things go among the natives in Palestine, Ramleh is a prosperous community. It has many large orchards, and the fields produce heavy crops of grain. Yet the inhabitants live in rude stone houses, most of them just one story in height, roofed with long poles, or vaulted with a single arch of masonry, over which rubbish of all description is piled—weeds, bushes, tin cans, sticks and poles.

In most of the houses into which we peeped, there were goats, sheep and donkeys in the "living-room." A foul odour came out of the doors and people sat squatting around on dirt or stone floors before little charcoal stoves where they were making coffee, or stewing the single dish of grain or vegetables which comprises such a large item of diet. The little streets were so dirty that one may not describe them adequately. It was necessary, when in the principal thoroughfares, even near the stalls in the bazars where provisions and fruit are sold, to pick one's way about most carefully, although the natives slopped along, either barefoot or with their feet shoved into sandals with wooden heels, seeming not to care.

We went into the streets similar to those in which Joseph must have had his shop if he was a prosperous merchant, as is believed. They



STREET SCENE, RAMLEH.



were about two to three yards wide, muddy and filthy, the mud caused by the sprinkling from individual watering cans, which are dumped in front of stalls because they are supposed to make the air cooler—although it would take something more than water to remove the vile stench which is something like that of decaying vegetation seemingly steaming in the hot sun.

The merchants were squatting along little platforms raised about two feet from the ground, in front of their stalls. Most of them were old men with grey whiskers and huge pieces of brightly coloured cloth wound about their heads into turbans or sometimes into hoods that almost concealed their faces. They had hoarse cracked voices as they invited us to inspect their wares. One had two or three dozen bolts of calico and some strings of beads, another a small supply of camel's hair garments for Bedouins, another piles of beans or lentils, and another little piles of chopped meat into which he had kneaded garlic, parsley and green herbs. The streets were almost impassable on account of the number of goats, sheep and cows that were being driven along, their owners offering them for sale. Camels stalked in and out of the narrow thoroughfares, led or ridden by black desert men, so that one was sometimes



obliged to take shelter in a booth to permit the "ships of the desert" to pass with their bulky boxes and bundles.

We were glad when we emerged from the crush and found ourselves near the big convent, where the believers in legend and tradition like to think that the house of Joseph stood, although there is not the slightest evidence to support the belief. All the surrounding country is strewn with evidences of a decayed city. Along the roadside there are big hollow arches of masonry, chunks of broken pillars, carved caps to pillars, and much to lead one to believe that here was once a city of great importance. In fact, it is said that Arimathea may once have rivalled Jerusalem itself in importance. But its glory has departed. It has little trade, and the merchants whom we saw gave the appearance of being anything but rich. There was no outward suggestion of enough combined wealth among the merchants to own a family tomb at Jerusalem in modern days.

Ramleh was a prominent city during the Crusades, and one of the Christian churches built by the Crusaders is now a Mohammedan mosque. Thus begins the repetition of a sentence that frequently must be repeated: "Once a Christian church, but now a Mosque." Our drago-

man repeated the words at least once a day and sometimes many times a day, although the Christian world does not seem to realize how completely Palestine is within the Moslem grasp. It is a rather crude stone structure, barely worthy of a visit, because it is necessary to turn around in some of the filthy streets to arrive at its entrance—and one always takes chances in the streets of Ramleh. There are other churches ahead of us built by the Crusaders much worthier of a visit, so we carefully picked our way back to the main thoroughfare that leads to the railway station.

Although in this district there are scenes in the activities of Jeremiah, Elijah and Elisha, although Samson dwelt hereabouts and gave a spectacular interest to some of the hills, we decided that we had better take the train from Ramleh on our way up to Jerusalem. The train moves very slowly up through the hills and makes little better time than the fleet dromedaries that sometimes race along from Jaffa to Jerusalem, but the trains are more comfortable, where they are found, than jogging along over ill-kept roads, so we went to the little station a half-mile beyond Ramleh and waited for the evening train. I believe the railroad builders were wise in placing the station where they did.

The trains are principally patronized by tourists and pilgrims. If they stopped directly in front of the filthy town which occupies the site of Arimathea nobody would get off. As it is, the town takes on a different appearance as viewed up there on the hill from the valley through which the railroad runs, and some of the pious or curious halt their journeys to see where Joseph lived.

We had several hours to wait for the train, and the railway attendants seemed to try to make us comfortable. They brought out little stools for us to sit on in the shade of big trees in the railroad yard, and they passed Turkish coffee, for which they declined to accept payment, although one of the men told me just before the train arrived that he would like a little "baksheesh"—which is literally a "gift"—so that he might always remember me and our pleasant visit to the station grounds of Ramleh.

Down the road came trains of camels, and their drivers stopped beneath the trees for coffee. In fact, the place seems to be a coffee rendezvous. Here they all chatted, and their gestures proved that they were as interested in us as we were in them. Finally, they made a circle around us and squatted down, apparently to wait for the train. One offered me a ciga-

rette and by way of payment I volunteered to show the crowd a little trick with a disappearing match and a handkerchief that Thurston, the magician, had showed me. They seemed to marvel at it and clapped their hands for approval and asked me to repeat it. No magician of reputation ever had a more attentive audience and the exclamations of joy were akin to those that greet a great Italian diva after she has warbled a well-known aria and the gallery is filled with her countrymen. The Palestinian does nothing by halves, his applauding, or his cursing that which does not please him.

Along came a fat man of nearly three hundred pounds at least. He saluted us and rolled over onto a stool and they brought him a small glass of something to drink that looked like water and smelled like absinthe. The station agent, who spoke a little English, informed us that he was the richest man in Ramleh, and that he owned most of the fertile fields which we could see from our position at the station. Such wealth gave him a social standing in his community that is difficult for an Occidental to appreciate. Immediately all eyes were directed to him, all conversation was directed to him and the natives told him of the trick and I repeated it for him. With considerable effort he reached

in the pocket of his gown and pulled out three withered roses, which he handed to us. That showed that we were his "eternal friends," said the station agent. Any way, when we finally boarded the train and found our compartment, we looked out of the window, and there stood the rich and fat gentleman, surrounded by the troupe of Bedouins, all of them touching their hands to their foreheads in a parting salute to us.

And this parting with Ramleh, after such disappointing experiences in the town itself, became rather ridiculous, when I told our dragoon at Jerusalem about it. I told him about the "trick" in which they had appeared to be so much interested.

"Oriental politeness," he replied.

"But they were surprised," I pleaded.

"It's one of the oldest tricks I know," he laughed. "Came from Egypt, and I venture to say that every youngster ten years of age in Ramleh could perform it—and many others. But probably they thought that was the only trick you could perform, so they encouraged you in believing that you were entertaining them. Oh, the Oriental—even those critters from Ramleh may be very polite, as you have seen."

## CHAPTER IV

### UP TO JERUSALEM

**O**VER the port of Jaffa a sign should be erected to read "Abandon all hope of travelling by train, ye who enter Palestine." It's a small country, this where so much has transpired in the world's history, not exceeding about one hundred and fifty miles in length from Dan to Beersheba, and having an area of about ten thousand five hundred square miles. But even that area assumes rather large proportions when one takes into consideration the modes of travel to and from the principal places of interest—even those spots which have become shrines for the pilgrims of the world. Almost any government in the world except Turkey, which unfortunately has control of the Holy Land, would endeavour to make some sort of improvements in the means of transportation, the hotels and others things which contribute to the comfort of travellers, for a great deal of money flows into Palestine every year from the

purses of travellers from the outside world. Even the poorest pilgrims from Russia who flock here by the thousands, and are better taken care of by their national government and church than the pilgrims from any other country, leave a good deal of silver in their wake. They bring contributions from their friends and neighbours at home. While they are here they must live and make some expenditure. Almost any government would attempt to lessen their burdens by providing good roads at least, perhaps tram cars to the principal objective points, and perhaps railroads. But not Turkey.

The theory at Constantinople seems to be that people will come here anyway. Make it as hard as possible for them, and they come all the same. Let them climb over rocky paths, and they appreciate it more and believe that they are enduring hardships for a worthy cause. Let them half starve at wayside monasteries and convents or herd together in the courtyards of religious edifices. Let their weary feet bleed from tramping over stony roads. Let the tourists meet with as many discomforts as possible. Let them stay at second-rate hotels and pay first-rate prices. Let them scramble over the hills on lean mules and donkeys or be jolted in bulky wagons. Let pilgrims faint, even die, as many

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of them do. People will come all the same. They have been coming for centuries and they continue to pour into Palestine from all Mediterranean ports. Probably they know of the discomforts, sanitary dangers and all of the other dangers. Still they come. It is the Holy Land, the Thrice Holy Land, the pivot around which revolve the Jewish, Christian and Mohammedan religions, for the Prophet of Mecca taught his disciples to turn toward Jerusalem when they prayed before he taught them to turn toward Mecca. Men must come here. It is a natural inclination, for religion is deeply seated in mankind and it is the most natural thing in the world to attempt to trace anything so fundamental to its source.

Thousands upon thousands of pilgrims go to a little city on the River Avon each year because a great poet and dramatist was born and buried there. It gives them a thrill to think that they are in the streets where Shakespeare walked, that they see the houses that he saw, and they loiter along the river banks, imagining that in his day he also found pleasure in a similar occupation. How much more then should men become pilgrims to Jerusalem. Here was David, here Jesus Christ and here Mahomet. Much connected with their sacred



lives on earth transpired within the walls of the Holy City. The man of Stratford was a genius. Many men of Jerusalem are looked upon by millions of other men as prophets of God, while millions acknowledge one to have been the Son of God. Little wonder that men come here in droves. The government of Turkey, or ten governments worse than that of Turkey, could not keep them away.

There are rumours of a trolley line that is "soon" to be put into operation between Jerusalem and Bethlehem, but the Jaffa Gate at Jerusalem was partly torn away when the German Emperor made his visit to the Holy Land several years ago, making way for this improvement. The most optimistic native to whom I have talked in regard to the line declares that he believes the line may be in operation in about two years. Improvements, like everything else, move slowly in the East, and nobody expects haste.

As a consequence, there is a railroad from Damascus south, that is taken by pilgrims to Mecca—a matter in which the Ottoman government has some interest, but it runs away east of the Jordan and Dead Sea and is impossible to travellers who wish to go from Jerusalem. So the only line of any value to persons who

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care to visit the holy places in the vicinity of Jerusalem is that snake-like thing that moves up to the capital from Jaffa and takes so many hours in moving that its record has been broken by dromedaries moving in the opposite direction.

Jerusalem is set high up in the hills, approximately three thousand feet above the level of the Mediterranean. It is a little over fifty miles from Jaffa, and the record running time is something like four hours. The equipment is a little antiquated but not otherwise much unlike the trains to be met with in Europe. The rolling stock was built in France for the Panama railroad, the owners of the Palestine road bought the stock and sent it here. I believe it is still operating and managed by Frenchmen, although most of the employés seem to be Arabs. The cars have corridors through the centre, but they are cut up into compartments of various sizes, probably for the accommodation of parties of various sizes; thus it is possible sometimes for a party of twenty travelling together to have a single compartment, and the same thing is true for a party of four. Foreigners like this exclusiveness, and they scramble for seats "alone," although the idea is not so well known to Americans, and therefore the arrangement

does not make an appeal to tourists from that country.

As we took the train at Ramleh, instead of Jaffa, we had already passed through the fertile Plain of Sharon when we entered our compartment headed toward the Holy City. Soon the train began to zig-zag through the rocky gorges of the mountains of Judea and things almost immediately began to appear to be bleak, parched by the sun, and barren. Sometimes the train rises to a height of three thousand five hundred feet above the sea and then winds its way along shelves on the hillsides to a lower level, but the landscape does not change. There are numerous high peaks, that stand out with a salty whiteness, and many hills, some of which have a few olive trees on terraced rocky ledges, but one cannot see why the large flocks of goats and sheep are being driven over the wilderness. But you see them on almost every hillside, and when you come near enough you observe that the little animals are nibbling at small weeds that seem to be stubble left over from the last rains. The picture, however, is forbidding, and it does not improve until the train begins to pass little districts that seem to be thickly populated.

Finally, along the route there are clusters of

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stone houses, a few more olive trees, a few more people moving about, and the stranger imagines quite rightly that he is approaching Jerusalem, the city of David and Solomon, the city that remains a city although it has been partially destroyed forty times and totally wiped out at least eight times; the city that was once the most gorgeous, or at least the most famous for its gorgeousness of all the cities of the world.

The railway station is well beyond the city walls. Here the arriving passenger realizes for the first time what a variegated crowd he has accompanied on the trip from Jaffa. There are pilgrims from all of the countries of Europe and travellers from the four corners of the earth. All wear their distinctive costumes and all begin to jabber and endeavour to talk with the swarm of guides and coachmen who petition them for the chance to convey them into the city. They all jostle and crowd, yell, gesticulate, and endeavour to make themselves understood.

Most of the passengers on the crowded train upon which we arrived seemed to be carrying their baggage in a handkerchief at the end of a long stick swung over their shoulders. Most of them were old, and most of them seemed to be sorely in need of food and a comfortable

lodging for the night. But they were droved together like animals by an official who seemed to have them in charge, and they tramped along the platform of the station with heads bowed. They were soon to kiss the ground along the various pathways that lead out from Jerusalem. They carried their bed and cooking utensils with them—and some of them would never live to leave the country. We often heard of pilgrims who fell by the wayside, to be left under little mounds of earth.

Pathetic as it was, it was nothing compared to the views of pilgrims that we were to have a little later on. As we look back upon them now we are glad that they at least had one comfortable ride upon their long journey—the climb from Jaffa to Jerusalem by train, for their tickets allow that. Soon they were to embark upon that desperate challenge to faith that led them over rocky mountains in a desert land, where even a drink of water is a blessing. We saw them later trudging along in a mountain pass near Jericho near midnight, many of them about exhausted and ready to fall—and we pitied them.

At the Jerusalem station Turkish guards stand around quite powerless to keep anything like order. Evidently they wait until the crush

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is over, until the first of the incoming passengers have left and then they move about and try to give advice to those who are left behind.

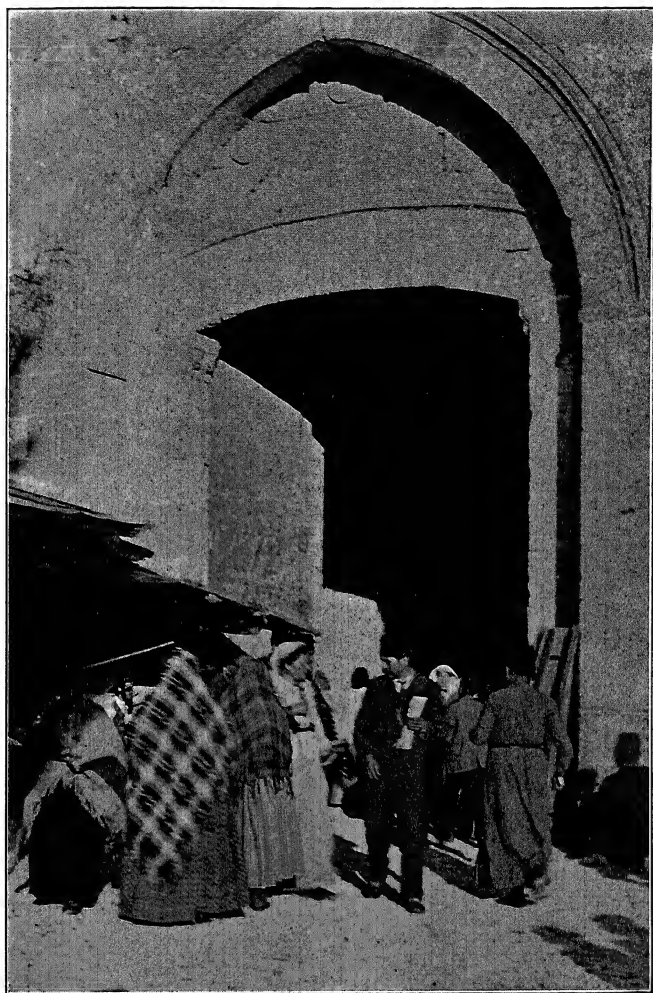
Jerusalem is a small city, in the modern sense of the word. Five hundred people arriving at one time give it the appearance of being uncomfortably jammed with tourists. The same number of strangers packs the hotels—that are worthy of the name of hotels—and unless one has fortified himself with some sort of a tourist's accommodation check, smiled at in Europe, but quite necessary in such a country as Palestine, he may find it a difficult matter to find even decent lodging for the night.

The typical Jerusalem carriage that meets tourists at the railway station would be an exhibit of note in any circus parade in America. It is an ancient ark-like thing that sways like a cradle as the horses gallop along the highway. Every driver seems to think that his passengers desire to arrive at their destination before any other passengers get there, so he whips his animals, and they go at full gallop, while he yells at the top of his voice for pedestrians and vehicles to get out of the way or be run down. After clinging to the seat through ten minutes of this Jerusalem speed mania we arrive beside the great wall of the city, which in most places looks

as if it might have been constructed yesterday of materials "made to look old," which we sometimes see at our Luna Parks and pleasure resorts. Yet parts of the foundation of the wall were certainly in place in the reign of Herod.

The walls of Jerusalem are beautiful when viewed from any of the surrounding hills, but the city has crept beyond the walls in many directions, and it is difficult to trace them throughout their length and breadth on account of the many structures that tower above them. But the sentimental traveller is glad of the fact that he arrives in Jerusalem through the Jaffa Gate. It stands practically as it stood in the days of Christ and perhaps before. The Tower of David, as the citadel by the Gate is popularly called, looms high to the right of the Gate, and the traveller immediately sees one of the oldest among the authenticated ruins of ancient Jerusalem. Almost certainly the lower portions of the tower were a part of Herod's palace. The horses dash along, but quickly come to a halt in front of an hotel. The gallop from the station has been too breathless to permit of much reflection regarding arrival in the Holy City.

About the first thing I knew I was in the hands of an hotel clerk who was showing me about various rooms, airily reciting the advantages



OUTSIDE THE JAFFA GATE, JERUSALEM.





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of occupying each and any of them, because there was something in his words to stir the blood of a stranger, although he spoke in a matter of fact way, as if he had been saying that this room was away from the noisy street, or that was one of the coolest rooms in the house.

As I selected the apartment that should be my temporary home in Jerusalem he walked out onto the balcony and pointing his hand straight ahead he asked, "Recognize that black dome?" I did not.

"That's the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. You see the other dome over there? That's the Mosque of Omar, the scene of Solomon's Temple, Herod's Temple, and covering the rock upon which Abraham was about to sacrifice Isaac. That hill is the Mount of Olives. See the green trees over there? That's the Garden of Gethsemane. It's a very fine room, very attractive. One sees all the 'sights' here from his balcony."

And he went away. "Within a stone's throw from the Church of the Holy Sepulchre." The clerk had said it as if an American hotel clerk had told a stranger that he could see the lake or the river from a tenth story window. He cared more about renting his rooms than he did about the real meaning of the structures of Jerusalem that cause people to come here from the

ends of the earth. I sat alone on the balcony as the shadows of evening began to blot out the Garden of Gethsemane and until it faded away with the entire Mount of Olives. Darkness fell, and out of the darkness a great illuminated cross arose before me. It was upon the dome that marks the spot where Jesus Christ was crucified.

## CHAPTER V

### JERUSALEM THE "GOLDEN"

**I**T would take a Zola with his capacity for describing mobs to give anything like an adequate description of Jerusalem streets at the present time. It is impossible that such a strange crowd should assemble elsewhere. In fact, I believe that any sort of hoodlum might walk around the thoroughfares of the Holy City and not excite the least comment, perhaps not a glance from passers by. Without doubt, there are many raving lunatics, who in a Western country would be lodged in cool rooms where they would be receiving medical attention. Here they wander about the streets, squat around corners at places where they will be observed by many people, and many of them chatter as if in prayer. They wear outlandish costumes—sometimes their bodies are draped in rags—and they profess a belief in some religion or other. Jerusalem is the meeting-place of all the religionists of the Western world.

One morning I posted myself beside the Jaffa Gate for the purpose of forming some definite idea, if possible, of the real character of the Jerusalem street crowd; but I soon became sadly muddled. The nations of the world streamed through that Gate within the hour, and more than that. There were the sane and conscientious travellers from the countries of the world, and there were the representatives of half of the creeds and sects that flourish under the sun, most of them recognizable from their costumes; and there were the fanatical religionists who seem to feel that they must do something peculiar, either in wearing apparel, style of dressing the hair, in hats, sandals, or girdles, to indicate to all who see them that they are striving to be just a little different from the rest of the people of the world.

Just as a rather striking example of what I mean, I was sitting in the balcony of a little German restaurant, having arrived back in the city from the day's excursion, after dinner had been served at the hotel. In came a tall gentleman of perhaps thirty years. He wore a long white garment that reached to his ankles, rough reed sandals on his feet, no hose and no hat. His hair was a dark brown with a tinge of red or auburn and hung about his shoulders. His

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beard was trimmed in such a manner that he was the exact image of the portrait of Jesus Christ that has been reproduced by so many artists that the world has come to accept it as authentic. At least, I thought when this poseur arrived that we were in for a lecture, or perhaps he was distributing tracts of some sort. But, to my surprise—and I seemed to be the only stranger around the place, and consequently the only person who paid any attention to him—the white-robed gentleman ordered some Munich beer and pretzels, and when it was served to him he sat back and enjoyed his "Dutch lunch" in a manner that proved him well acquainted with the brown fluid from the Fatherland.

One sees these strange creatures wandering around the streets at all times of the day. They dress as they believe Jesus Christ dressed, and they try to look like Him. The limits to which some of these people will go in their zeal to imitate Christ is almost beyond belief. I have visited several deep ravines and gullies in Palestine, where they are spending their entire lives in little fissures and caves in the rock and where they would starve unless the monks from some nearby convent let food down to them in baskets—all because Jesus

Christ spent forty days in the wilderness. Some of them creep on their knees, or crawl with their bodies flat on the pavement all the way from Jerusalem across the valley to the Garden of Gethsemane. I saw a "holy man"—as they are popularly called when they are spoken of at all—living in the top of a tree. Some attempt to starve for the sake of their religion. Others wax fat and stout of purse as a result of "holy" practices.

Religion is in the air in Jerusalem and its environs. Our dragoman, who has seen the holy places of Palestine so many times, and who has explained and elaborated upon passages of Scripture so many times for pilgrims and tourists that he has come to grow rather doubtful of many of the locations of great events that are pointed out to tourists, not long ago made the wager that he could set up a stone anywhere around Jerusalem, let it be known as having some sort of historical or sacred interest and it would attract any number of pilgrims inside of two hours. His wager was taken, and he placed a few burning candles on a rock that he found by the roadside. The first pilgrim who passed that way stopped and knelt by the stone and deposited a few coins upon it. Others came along and left their contributions, so that when the

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candles had burned low he had a collection of nearly a dollar.

People who journey to Jerusalem seem to be so overcome by the realization that they are in the Holy City that many of them completely lose all sense of judging realities from most absurd fakes. For the wicked schemers of the world have not stayed away from Jerusalem. A long time ago they realized that it was the best field in the world for working upon the susceptibilities of the crowd. They have all sorts of schemes for getting money from the purses of pilgrims—but the pilgrims do not seem to care. They have made their journey to the Holy City of the Holy Land. They care not at the time for a few dollars thrown away.

As I sat beside the Jaffa Gate I saw, first of all, several trains of camels enter the city, loaded with produce for the market. Then came many men on donkeys. They were perched high on bags of grain, which took the place of saddles. They wore gaudy headgear draped and bandaged about their foreheads and chins and held in place by rolls of camel's hair. Some of them were genuine Bedouins and wore the big white and brown striped coats that serve as a protection from the sun in the daytime and a warm covering at night.



Perhaps the really characteristic note of the endless procession was provided by the men and women representatives of the varied religious organizations which have their homes inside and outside of the city walls. Some of them wore brown costumes, others white, blue, yellow, and about every tint and shade known to artists. Some wore poke bonnets and others caps that resembled tiles two feet long. Some were made of straw, others of felt. Roman crosses hung from many belts, and Greek crosses from others, perhaps the latter more numerous than the former, for the Greek and Russian churches are firmly planted in Palestine; they own valuable real estate throughout the country, and particularly the Russian nation, unlike the others, takes care of thousands of pilgrims from its country who pass this way. In the midst of the crowd are many peasants dressed in exactly the same costumes that they would wear in the fields at home. They can barely raise the heavy nailed boots from the hot pavement as they scuff along. The girls and young women wear gaudy head-dresses, but their elders are usually dressed in black or brown.

While sitting beside the Gate I saw the highway suddenly cleared and heard the pounding of

metal on the pavement. Looking through the Gate I saw a stately procession arriving. The Patriarch of Jerusalem was going to call upon the Archbishop of Antioch, who was in the city. He was preceded by about six escorts, who pounded the road in unison with the bases of the big staffs which they carried. The patriarch, a splendid and dignified gentleman of perhaps seventy years, walked alone, but he was followed by at least twenty monks and priests of the Greek Church. They wear tall black hats, black gowns, and their hair is twisted into a coil at the neck and brought up under the hat.

Close behind the patriarch came several Yemen Jews from Arabia. They are picturesque gentlemen, whose hair is sometimes tightly clipped excepting two long curls that fall from their temples nearly to their shoulders. But their custom of wearing long curls in front of the ears is common to most of the Jews of Jerusalem. The little boys have them and so do the greybeard. Most of the Jews wear brilliantly coloured coats that reach to their ankles, and many of them have bright satin caps with rows of long fur for brims—which appear to be quite unseasonable in the warm climate of summer in Jerusalem. I saw some of them with long satin coats the colour of lilac, and also bright coral

pink trimmed with sable. Others wore brilliantly striped calico coats and broad brimmed black felt hats. The Spanish Jews were easily distinguished from the others, because many of them are beggars, and insistent beggars—even intoxicated beggars, as I afterward learned—although it is said in Jerusalem that the Spanish and Portuguese Jews consider themselves much higher in social caste than Jews from the colder climates of northern countries, but for what reason one cannot imagine.

In the crowd passed several Jews from Bokhara, men who adhered to the Cossack costume with high boots, long coats and tight-fitting astrakhan fur caps. Turkish soldiers were passing to and from their barracks. Mohammedan ladies with white and black veils and Mohammedan gentlemen with the tarbush, Christian gentlemen with the tarbush, American gentlemen on donkeys, Japanese visitors dressed in their native costumes and fanning vigorously. White Fathers, members of a missionary order in Africa, Persians with their little black caps and finely embroidered jackets, and, in the midst of all of these, many persons whose identity could not be traced, because most of them have individual and eccentric raiment which stamps them as believers in something slightly op-

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posed to the beliefs of their fellow-men. Through the Jaffa Gate passes a never-ending circus parade to the visitor from the Western world. ✓

An Abyssinian funeral procession passed. There is quite a large colony of Abyssinians in Jerusalem, many of them monks with shining black faces, who are met with at most of the holy shrines in the neighbourhood, for they claim to have been the earliest Christians and declare that their religious practices are the same as they were in the beginning. The funeral partook of many of the characteristics of a Mohammedan funeral. The black-robed priests who preceded the body-bearers were chanting and intoning prayers as they stepped along slowly. The jet black women, who wear white for mourning, followed the men, and had a chant and lamentation of their own.

Following them came three market-women of Bethlehem, wearing the long white veils perched on high caps which distinguish them from all the other women of Palestine. Syrian cavalry officers came along on prancing Arab horses, and in the press there were many of those porters who have always been a marvel to strangers.

The streets of Jerusalem within the walls are

so narrow and crowded that it is impossible to drive a wagon through them and many of them are built of a series of steps upon the hillside, so that it is a task to lead camels or donkeys through them after sunrise. Therefore, most of the carrying and portering is done by men. They carry the most surprising loads. I am told that they will step along lively with six hundred pounds upon their backs, with stout ropes holding the bundles to their foreheads. I saw a man with a piano on his back, and I have frequently seen men with six or seven big wooden packing cases of merchandise crowding their way along the thoroughfare with even heavier loads than I saw that first hour at the Jaffa Gate.

Cairo, which is the meeting-place of the East and West, is popularly supposed to offer more varied types than any other city in the world, but even Cairo is not so cosmopolitan as Jerusalem. People come here from everywhere on earth as they go to Cairo, but they do not become fused with the other races. The Bokharan Jew is easily distinguished by his strikingly Mongolian features, and the Yemen Jew learns no language but Arabic, while his brother from Russia often speaks Yiddish, and the men who come from Portugal and Spain cling to their re-

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spective languages, customs and costumes, having only Hebrew religious beliefs that make them Jews of common stock. The same thing is true of most of the other people from Europe. Nations have their respective quarters and their inhabitants do not mingle with the people of other nations to any degree. The same thing is true of the religionists. Sometimes Greeks, Roman Catholics and Armenians have altars and worship in the same church, but they have separate services and one man does not attend the service of foreigners and the man of one religion does not pass before the altar of another or step upon a part of the floor allotted to another unless it is necessary for him to do so. In a church where space was cramped and it was necessary for Roman Catholic priests to pass over a large carpet in front of an Armenian altar, I observed that a yard had been cut off the corner of the carpet, so that it need not be touched by the feet of alien priests.

America has been called "The Melting Pot" of the nations, and it is true that over there all the nations are being fused. In Jerusalem, as in no other place, they never fuse and remain always the same.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE CITY OF DAVID

**I**T is natural for the traveller to desire to have at least a peep at Jerusalem before he goes elsewhere in Palestine, and his wish is likely to be gratified, for Jerusalem is one of the most accessible of all the interior cities in Palestine and from it radiate the roads that lead to most of the other places that one desires to visit. For the time being, however, we preferred to reserve our impressions of the sights of Jerusalem for a later time. We wanted to begin our travels in Palestine at Bethlehem, which was the cradle of Jesus, the spot over which that star shone which directed the shepherds from near-by hills to the lowly cavern which was used as a manger by the inn-keepers who afforded protection from the night to travellers to and from the capital city.

Long before that time Bethlehem was a veritable Mecca to the travellers in Palestine who knew their Bibles and cared for the greatest characters in the history recorded in the Old

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Testament. It was the City of David. It was where Samuel came up from Gilgal to select a king from among the men of Judea. It was where, according to the Book of Jeremiah, the prophet tarried with his friends at the house of Chinham. It was where Ruth gleaned in the fields of Boaz. It was where Jacob buried his beloved Rachel. But finally, it was where Jesus was born, and, unlike most of the places in Palestine, very few of the scholars throughout the ages have questioned that the identical spot now pointed out to travellers is the exact one where the Virgin Mary gave birth to the Child who was to become the Man of Sorrows. We wanted to see the Place of the Nativity before we saw the places that are identified with His ministry on earth, which culminated in the tragedy on Calvary.

As before noted, things have not changed appreciably in a couple of thousand years in Palestine, excepting from a purely physical surface. Landscapes remain practically unchanged, and pathways that led down mountain slopes into the valleys in the days when David herded his sheep and hid in a cave from Saul lead down into the valleys to-day, or the ancient trails are followed closely by the newer roads. People are probably about the same. Their costumes in a



city like Bethlehem have not changed much for at least one thousand years, so there is no reason to believe that they have changed for two thousand years. Even spiritually, it is declared by students, they are about the same as they were when two lowly people of Nazareth, a village carpenter and his wife, arrived too late at the inn to be entertained in its regular apartments and were crowded out into the stables for the donkeys and cattle—an event that has changed the complexion of the world.

Throughout his journey in Palestine and Egypt, Newman has been anxious to obtain photographs of the present day characters and things that have remained practically as they were in the days of long ago when ancient history was being made. Thus he wanted to obtain photographs of the typical mother and child of the present at Bethlehem. He wanted gleaners in the wheat fields of to-day who would suggest to his audiences the gleaners of Ruth's day. He wanted shepherds tending their flocks as did the boy David, who was to become a mighty king. I felt an interest in reversing the Palestine journey, as it is taken by most pilgrims and tourists, and wanted to begin at the beginning of the Christian era—also at Bethlehem. And,



“ RUTH.” — FROM A PAINTING BY BRUCK - LAJOS.



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by a stroke of fortune, Newman obtained every photograph that he wanted, and I started to "do" Palestine as I wanted to do.

Accordingly, we started out in a heavy three-horse wagon one morning, leaving Jerusalem by the Jaffa Gate and rattling down the stony hill on the ancient road that leads to Bethlehem. It was early in the morning and bells from dozens of steeples and domes were clanging furiously. As one looks back upon it, Jerusalem seems to be a city of turrets, minarets and belfries—and perhaps appropriately so. There are bells ringing all day, and the stranger is likely to believe that they are ringing all night, for at some hour of the day or night, some religious order is calling its members to prayer, and once, at every short interval, the magnificent chime of bells from the Church of the Holy Sepulchre sounds in tones that seem to be like the radiance of stars from a skyrocket. This is a powerful chime, but it is mellow and gentle, of beautiful tone, and instead of stopping abruptly, dies away in the distance, so that one scarcely realizes when the ringing has ceased. And the chiming of bells within the city seems to be answered by the convent and monastery bells on all of the hills outside of the city.

Thus, as we started, it seemed something

momentus in our lives. The air was filled with the chiming of bells—and we were leaving Jerusalem for Bethlehem!

The road leads along a somewhat rocky wilderness, where the peasants endeavour to utilize every square foot of ground. One meets women in the road with bundles of grain not more than three inches in diameter. The goats belonging to a little shepherd boy who must be David to the sentimental traveller, do not seem to like the idea of us passing them, so they stand in the road and the boy has to pelt them with stones and finally throw his club at them before they will climb up the rocky hill at the side. We ask him to pose for a photograph and he consents, after a promise of more money than he can possibly earn in two or three days as a shepherd. Encouraged by his action, and quite certain that he was a Mohammedan, although the Mohammedans as a class do not like the camera, we stopped and climbed over the wall into a small field of wheat where a pretty peasant girl of thirteen or fourteen years was cutting grain with a small knife. We asked her to pose but she hesitated. A young man about sixteen years of age came forward, asked her what it was that we wanted and she explained to him, after which he said that he was her hus-

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band and would consent to let her stand before the camera for a franc. We agreed, and Newman was getting his apparatus into place when a donkey came galloping down the road with a fierce looking individual astride its back. It was the girl's father, and she explained to him, as she had explained to her husband, what was about to happen.

But her father jerked her by the arm and sent her into the next field, pouring abuse upon her for having consented to such an outrage during his absence. "In the days to come the people of the village may point their fingers at you and say, 'There is a girl who consented to stand before a camera for the strangers just because they gave her a franc,' " said the father, as our dragoman interpreted for us. So we were obliged to admit defeat and go on to other fields where there were Christian girls in the fields at work. We were obliged to look for a Christian Ruth!

It is about five miles from Jerusalem to Bethlehem, and every inch of the territory is full of historical association and legendary interest. The road is so old and such important things have happened on it that myths have grown up around every stone along the way. The visitor must be careful or he will see and hear so many

impossibilities along the route that he will be in no condition to view with an unprejudiced mind the authenticated realities. For instance, there is a tree that lifts its horizontal branches over the side of a cliff to the left. That is said to be the identical tree upon which Judas hanged himself, although there were few trees of the time of Christ—excepting those olive trees in the Garden of Gethsemane which still live and offer shade to pilgrims. There are ruins on the top of a hill which are called the remains of the summer palace of Caiaphas. By the roadside the exact well is pointed out where, according to Matthew ii:9, the Magi are said to have seen the guiding star of Bethlehem. A girl was drawing water from the well as we passed, and we were more interested in her picturesque costume than in the story which our dragoman attempted to impress upon our minds. The well is likely one of those spots to which legend has ascribed many unusual things, but there is nothing certain about it, excepting that it is a well.

The first real point of interest going from Jerusalem to Bethlehem is the Tomb of Rachel, which is much revered by Moslems, Christians and Jews, and which scholars accept as authentic.

Something like four thousand years ago a young sheik named Jacob came this way with his flocks and retinue. In the city of Bethlehem the young wife for whom he had served an apprenticeship of fourteen years died in the pangs of motherhood, and the many passages in the Bible which relate to the event seem to make it clear that he selected this spot by the roadside as an appropriate place for her tomb. In ancient times a pyramid of stones marked the grave, then a tomb was built, and it is certain that from before the Christian era the place now covered by a white dome that resembles a Mohammedan tomb has been pointed to as the last resting-place of the mother of Joseph.

It is not always open to visitors, but we were fortunate in being able to profit by the mischief of some youngsters from Bethlehem. Here we had brought to our attention for the first time in Palestine, perhaps, what we were often to observe later, the axiom that "boys will be boys," anywhere in the world; and there is no more difference between the boys of one land and the boys of another, when they have anything like similar conditions surrounding them, than when the boys have become men; and the travellers of the world agree that mankind is similar in all parts of the world, not alone in the



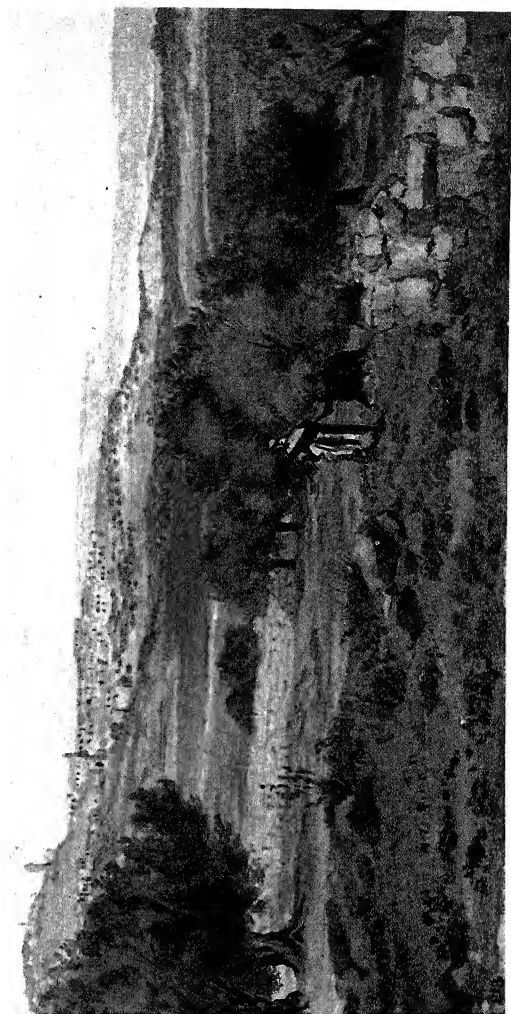
greater outward appearances, but in finer and purely mental characteristics.

But back to the boys of Bethlehem. They knew that pious people often made pilgrimages to the place, so they decided to have their joke and poured wax and other materials into the doorway, making it impossible to enter, so a gang of workmen had just dug a hole through the side of the tomb, opened the door by force and were closing the hole in the wall with cement, as we drove up and asked for admittance.

Under the white dome is a big white sarcophagus said to contain the remains of the rich man's wife. It seems peculiar that one of his wealth and standing should have selected this site by the highway for his favourite wife, and it has been wondered at that the Prime Minister of Egypt, a man with unlimited resources, should have permitted his mother's remains to lie here, when there was a family tomb where they belonged. But so it is, and it is believed that it was near this place that Saul was anointed by the prophet Samuel to be the king of Israel. A few tapestries are hung around the white-washed walls, there is a large chandelier into which cups of olive oil are fitted and pilgrims are invited to drop a coin into the









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collection box and pick up a taper that will burn in the tomb after their departure.

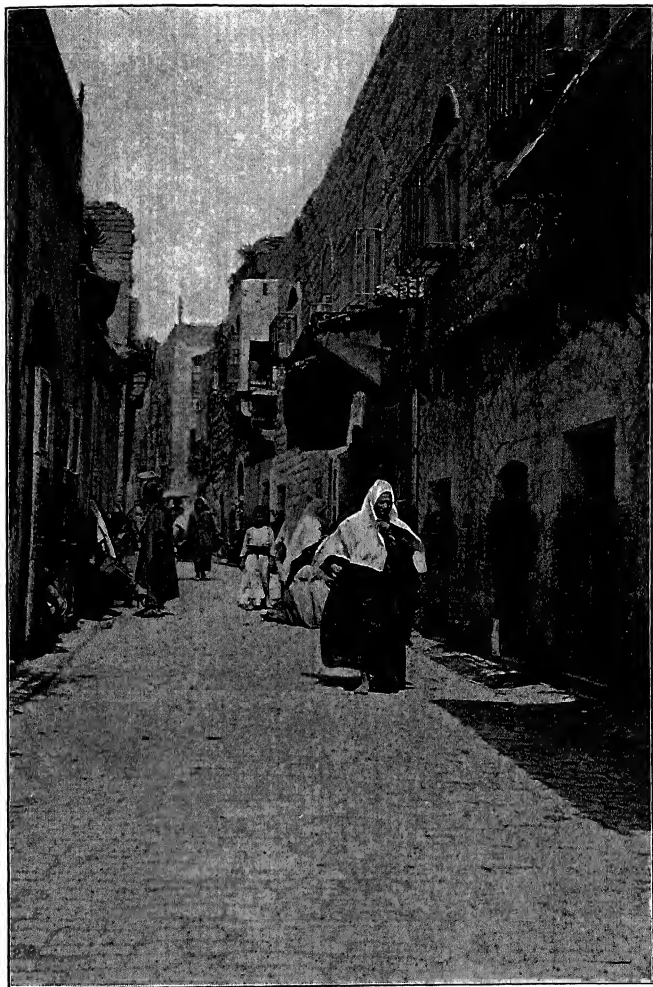
We leave the place and ride on through olive groves, which reach from the road to the top of the hills, giving the rocks an appearance of being fertile orchards when viewed from a distance. Our wagon stops and the dragoman points down in the valley to a field of olive trees that is known to this day as the "Shepherds' Field." It was there, according to tradition, that the shepherds were tending their flocks by night when they saw the star of Bethlehem and came to worship the Infant Jesus, as the angels sang an anthem of Peace and Good Will.

Close beside it is shown the field of Boaz where Ruth gleaned. And on further up the hill lies Bethlehem, the best looking city we have seen in Palestine. Viewed from a distance, its buildings seem to be white and new. From closer range, they are seen to be very old many of them, but the streets are clean, the people are above the grade of natives seen elsewhere, and there is a spick and span appearance to the ancient city that might serve as an example to most of the other cities in the country.

The Bethlehem of to-day is the busiest little city that I have seen since I left America; that is, more of its people seem to be employed in an

honest occupation. Most of the cities that are celebrated as places of pilgrimage, or which are a rendezvous for the world's travellers, seem to rest on their laurels. Add to that the natural inclination of the native of Palestine or Egypt to sit in the shade and let some one else do the work, and one does not approach the City of David expecting to find any particular activity. But in Bethlehem the men, women and children seem to be working. The result is a clean, well-built modern city, which does not encroach upon the ancient points of interest, but which does convey the impression that the natives of Bethlehem have enough to eat, that they can afford to be well fed, and that they may live more like human beings than is the case in many of the cities hereabouts. It is true that the wages are small, but the requirements of the people are small. They have plain white stone houses—for stone here is much cheaper than lumber, and it lasts longer—perhaps for four or five generations. The city is situated on a hill-side and it fairly shines with brightness in the sun, when it is approached on the road from Jerusalem.

Some of the labourers with whom I talked admitted that they received twenty cents a day for their toil and they begin at early dawn and



STREET SCENE, BETHLEHEM.





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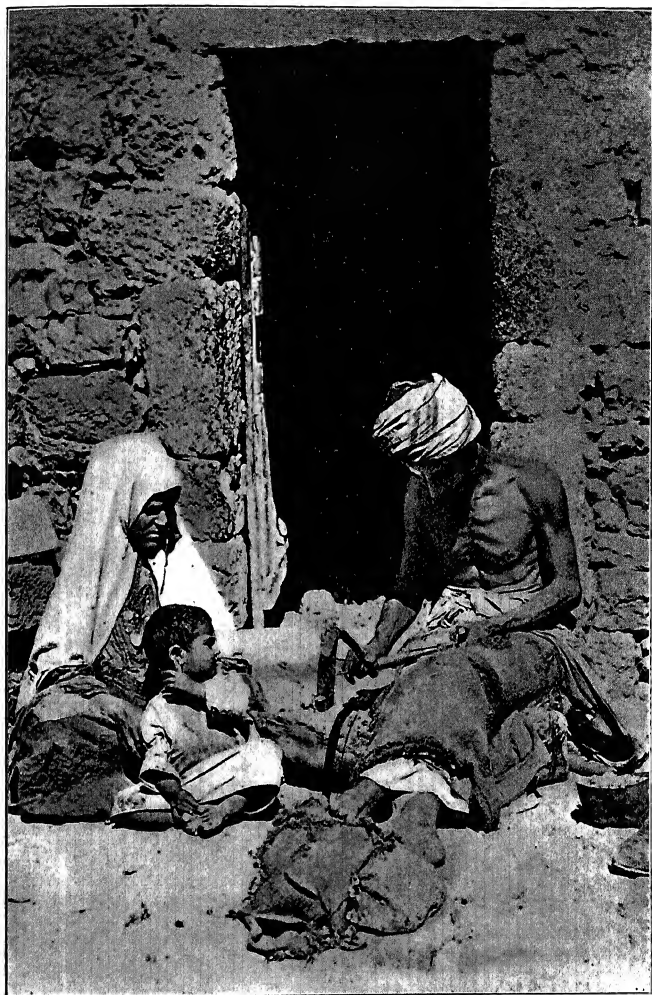
work until sunset, with a short time for their lunch at noon. But even work at twenty cents a day, under the existing conditions, is healthful and much better than sitting around the cafés, or squatting on street corners, which seems to be the principal occupation in some places, and cannot fail to have an evil effect socially.

The principal streets are filled with little shops—not where things are sold, but where things are made. Naturally, perhaps, the big industry of the place is the manufacture of religious souvenirs and art objects. Just the manufacture of rosaries for the Christian and Mohammedan churches has reached a point where it keeps hundreds of persons employed the year round. The objects they manufacture are unique. They are shipped from Bethlehem by the thousand and find a ready sale in all parts of the world, because the Bethlehem stamp gives them a sentimental value in the eyes of purchasers and because the Bethlehem workmen turn out good work. In some regards it cannot be matched elsewhere, because many of the workers have devoted their entire lives to one detail of the manufacture, and they are now able to produce artistic pearl work for altars and church decoration that is beautiful and

rarely attempted except by the workmen of this city.

At the American colony stores at Jerusalem they told me that others are constantly attempting to duplicate the Bethlehem product, but that they do not succeed. In the first place, the world prefers to buy religious objects bearing the imprint of Bethlehem, and in the second place, the workmanship is not so good. Bethlehem craftsmen turn out some wonderful things made of mother-of-pearl, much of which finds its way into the churches of the world, for pious pilgrims like to purchase it for the ornamentation of churches back home; but a great many of the larger pieces are purchased for museums and repose in glass cases for inspection by the curious.

Most of the shells from which the pearl is obtained come from the Red Sea. They are shipped into Bethlehem in big bales and sold to the manufacturers much as pearl shell is sold to the manufacturers of pearl buttons at home, when it arrives in bales from Tahiti. The difference is that one man does not put in a large stock. One man does not expect to turn out a finished product. He has a little heap of shells in his factory, and he squats on the floor in a circle of his helpers and directs them in cutting



MAKING ROSARIES, BETHLEHEM.



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little circles out of the shells. These nuggets, shining on one side, but black or green on the other, are passed along to another factory, which is in a little room, where the proprietor sits in the circle with his helpers and begins the polishing process. So on and on the pieces of mother-of-pearl finally become glossy little beads, which are sorted as to size and form, perhaps by still another manufacturer, and then sold to the man whose business is the stringing of rosaries from the beads that have been sawed and polished by primitive little hand instruments unknown elsewhere, although perhaps they were the ancestors of those files and saws used by the makers of coral beads at Capri and southern Italy.

In most of the shops the stringing was being done by girls, who rapidly plied pincers and strung the beads at an almost incredible speed. Of course, there are probably larger factories, where the operation is all performed under one roof, but that described seems to be the common one, and naturally gives employment to a large number of people. Out of a population of about eleven thousand people, something like four thousand are engaged in the manufacture of pearl objects, souvenirs and crucifixes of olive wood, pits, and of sandalwood.

After wandering about the streets for some time it seemed to me that the entire city was given over to the little windowless shops which open their fronts to the road for light. I inquired concerning the residences of the inhabitants of a mother-of-pearl dealer, and after he had called my attention to the fact that over all of the shops are two or three stories, in which people live on the apartment house plan, he invited me to his home, believing, perhaps, I might like to see the inside of a Bethlehem home of modern days.

Without doubt it is a big improvement on the Bethlehem home of two thousand years ago, but it seemed to me that there is still room for improvement. The "house" was on the second floor and had several rooms, but it seemed that several other families occupied the small courtyard and that they had a sort of community kitchen, for eight or ten women were busy making bread to put into a common oven, as we were shown that particular apartment. The corner of the big drawing-room was "curtained" off by large Turkish rugs that were suspended from the ceiling and evidently made the "spare bedroom." Turkish rugs were on the floor to such an extent that in some places they were two or three thick and made a splendid

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cushion for the stone floor, because the drawing-room was paved with heavy flagstones two feet long and one wide. There was a phonograph and two couch-like benches on two sides of the room that served for chairs. The phonograph was immediately set in motion, in honour of our visit, and buzzed Turkish or Arabic music. Now, Arabic or Turkish music may sound much the same to one from the West. Occasionally we were treated to a Persian selection, and it all seemed very much alike to our untrained ears. These Oriental strains are not exactly displeasing when one hears them from a phonograph on a Nile boat, from the throat of a fellah in the fields, or even from a native band in the open park, as at the Ezbekiah gardens at Cairo. But just why the master of a Christian household will permit such unearthly shrieks, wails and groans to escape from a machine within the four walls of his own home, or how the other members of the family can sit calmly on cushioned divans and pretend to enjoy it, is beyond human comprehension, at least that comprehension that has its birth north of Gibraltar and west of Naples. Imagine a screeching tin whistle punctuating itself at intervals in the sound made by several automobile horns and beating tom-toms and it will be fairly evident what sort



of musical entertainment was offered by the Bethlehem trader to his Western guests. Coffee was served immediately after our arrival and cool lemonade was served before we left. Fortunately we made our tour of inspection of the house after we had enjoyed both, for the people of Palestine take it almost as an insult if one does not appear to enjoy the refreshments they pass, and it might not have been so easy if we had seen earlier what we saw later.

Beside the big lemonade jar in the kitchen stood a cute little donkey. That was his stable—on the second floor of a “house” in the kitchen. “He is only a month old,” explained our host, “and we’ve always kept him up here with us, but one of these days he’ll have to go down on the street and do his share of the world’s work.” And we left the house thinking that it would be at least a sanitary thing for our Bethlehem friends when that happy day arrived and donkey was taken out of the house for at least a few hours in the daytime.

Primarily, we wanted to see some of the costumes worn by the ladies of Bethlehem. They dress distinctively and are easily distinguished on even the crowded streets of Jerusalem. Our host asked his daughters to put on all of their finery and parade in the sunny courtyard for the

photographer. It is difficult to describe the "styles of Bethlehem," which never change. The mother dresses as her daughter dresses when she is a little girl, and as she will dress when she, too, becomes a mother and grandmother. The young lady of Bethlehem begins to add to her collection of coins when she is very young. These are punctured and woven into a crown that wreathes the forehead beneath the white veil. Then there are so many necklaces of coins that one feels able to account for the stringency in the money market of Palestine. Once, when the little girl stepped out, arrayed in her finest costume, she could scarcely carry the load of junk suspended from her head, arms, neck and shoulders. She felt really "fixed up" on this occasion and the other ladies looked up admiringly. Apparently, they had loaded everything that all of them possessed upon the child that she might be "beautiful" in the picture.

"Promise that they are only for America," cautioned the mother in fairly good English, "for it would be terrible to have my daughter's photograph upon a souvenir post card."

We promised, gave the little girl two francs for her trouble—which will probably add that much weight to her "dowry"—and then we

passed out copper coins to the crying youngsters at the foot of the stairs, enough of them so that we have no fear for the number of the future Bethlehem's population. They had been kept away while the photographs were being taken and childlike they wanted to see what was going on.

It is declared that there are no Jews living in Bethlehem and that there are very few Mohamedans. This popular belief seemed to be barely justified, however, by the people we saw in the markets and the streets of the city. Bethlehem has a market just like any other prosperous little city, but it seemed rather strange, and, having formed a market-going habit, I wanted to add an impression of that in the city of the Nativity to my list. About the only difference between this and any other Palestine market seemed to be that it was cleaner than the others in the East. Market women, all draped in the big white head-dress of the city, sold piles of cucumbers and marrows for a shockingly small price, but they smiled as they closed a bargain and were apparently happy. Almost every one who bought a handful of cucumbers went away from the stalls munching at one, eating skin and all, but this isn't so bad as it sounds. I bought one as an experiment

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and tasting of it found that its skin was not bitter, as ours at home, and also it had a sweetish, but almost tasteless flavour that had little suggestion of cucumber about it.

There are not many "sights" for the tourist in Bethlehem. People usually hurry out here in a carriage after breakfast in Jerusalem and are back in the capital for luncheon. There are many things to see along the road, and after being ushered through the church that marks the cave that was the birthplace of Jesus Christ, tourists hasten along to other points of interest. It seems that Jesus Christ never visited His birthplace, or, at least, there is no absolute record of His having done so, although He must have come frequently within sight of it on His various journeys to and from Jerusalem. In fact, it is possible to see both cities from the top of a hill that lies between them. It is also likely that the Holy Mother never came to Bethlehem again, and there seems to be nothing that connects or associates the Holy Family with the city in any way, excepting the accident of being there at the time of the birth of Jesus.

Some visitors remain in Bethlehem longer and feel repaid for so doing, because there is much of interest, if one has any interest in the Old Testament allusions to the place. One

should not, for example, fail to see the well at the south gate to the city, which is still in use and was quite likely the well to which David referred when he cried: "Oh, that one would give me a drink of the water of Bethlehem which is by the gate." Then three men went and procured the water for him and he was chagrined that he had caused men to risk their lives in this manner, so he took the water "and poured it out unto the Lord."

To me, the most remarkable thing about the Church of the Nativity at Bethlehem was that it was guarded inside and outside by Turkish soldiers, who are Mohammedans. The tourist in Palestine soon becomes accustomed to finding either that the Turkish authorities deny admittance altogether to certain places that are deemed holy by Christians, or to finding it necessary to be accompanied by a kavass from one's consulate, that ornamental soldier with baggy trousers, a big sword dangling by his side, a fez and a gun, when about to enter a church of particular interest. "These Mohammedans are fanatical," it is explained, as an excuse for the escort, and terrible stories are told of the Christians who were shot within this or that church, because they were not accompanied by a soldier, who is supposed to be an awe-inspiring creature,

although the men that have been assigned to me seem to be very much of the "tin" variety, and very largely Mohammedan gentlemen who receive a nice salary in the "tips" that they receive from sightseers. These individuals, and even the soldiers stalking around the churches, are not usually offensive; but in this particular case at Bethlehem, they are tremendously so. After I had gone down many slippery steps into the very cave and even the hole in the side of the cave where the Prince of Peace was born, when I looked at the big silver star in the floor, which, marked by the light from many gorgeous lanterns suspended from the ceiling, certainly caused me to fully realize for the moment at least, just where I was and what a wonderful event in the world's history once happened at the place before me, I heard the rattle of a gun being suddenly dropped to the pavement, and, although I had not noticed him before, there stood a fully uniformed and fully armed soldier of the Sultan. He stands there until he is relieved by a brother soldier. Day and night the place is "guarded," as are several other spots throughout the church.

It is said that some years ago a remonstrance was made to the Sultan and he replied: "Those Christian dogs are always fighting and I've got

to preserve peace." All of which is likely to make the Christian rub his eyes to see if he really is awake. And the case, as it was explained to me, is not wholly one-sided. It is true enough that the Sultan does not always "preserve peace," but it is also true that the various sects and congregations professing to follow the teachings of Jesus Christ have misbehaved themselves most shamefully within the walls of this Church of the Nativity, just as they have at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem. There have been royal battles in the crypt under the church and people have been killed there, while disputing upon sectarian subjects, just as they have frequently been killed at Jerusalem within the tomb where the Saviour of men was placed after He was crucified, all of which seems to be more astonishing to Mohammedans than to their Christian brothers.

It is true that the Greeks have become satisfied with their little corner of the church, where they can conduct service as they please, that the Roman Catholics have their little corners with altars appropriately placed for their services, and the Armenians have their little corner, as do the Copts, and even the Abyssinians, although the Christians from the African continent have been crowded around to a little niche

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behind the Holy Sepulchre itself. The programme of services has now been very well agreed upon and there are comparatively few clashes. When one sect is worshipping, the other stays away. The Franciscan father does not attempt to do what the Greek father is in the habit of doing. At Jerusalem it looks as if all might be quiet for some time to come. The condition is different at Behlehem. Although the Church of the Nativity is a big structure—and as ugly architecturally as it is big—there is scarcely room enough for any sort of representation by the various denominations. And even this fact must not be overlooked in a survey of conditions of the Christian. The church would have been enlarged years ago, but no sect would give the desired permission to another. A movement was once on foot to ornament the front of the building with a porch, but not even this would be permitted, because no satisfactory arrangements could be made among the Christian denominations, who feared that one permitted to make “improvements” would attempt to claim ownership. In forming their processions to go through their chapel into the crypt, the Greeks are obliged to pass a corner of the Armenian chapel. A rug is placed on the floor, obliquely cutting off the space agreed upon.



The Greek priest must not step upon the Armenian's carpet or there might be trouble, although there is a soldier standing near with a gun on his shoulder to "preserve the peace" and to see to it that disputes do not develop into battles, and all above the "manger" in which the Prince of Peace was born!

These conditions seem absurd or worse to the casual observer, and the man who enters any of the churches marking distinct and certain events in the life of Jesus Christ receives a shock when some of them are explained to him. For instance, I asked my dragoman why a soldier was standing near three cobweb covered windows near the altar of the Greek church, and learned that when some Greek monks attempted to clean the windows the other church representatives stopped them from doing so and a battle seemed to be imminent, because it was claimed that the right to clean the windows might carry with it an idea of ownership, and I have found during my tour of Palestine that the Greek Church is already in actual control of so much property in the Holy Land that the other denominations are not likely to let it extend its domain. So the soldier was detailed to watch these windows. He has been there—or another just like him—for several years. The windows are so covered with

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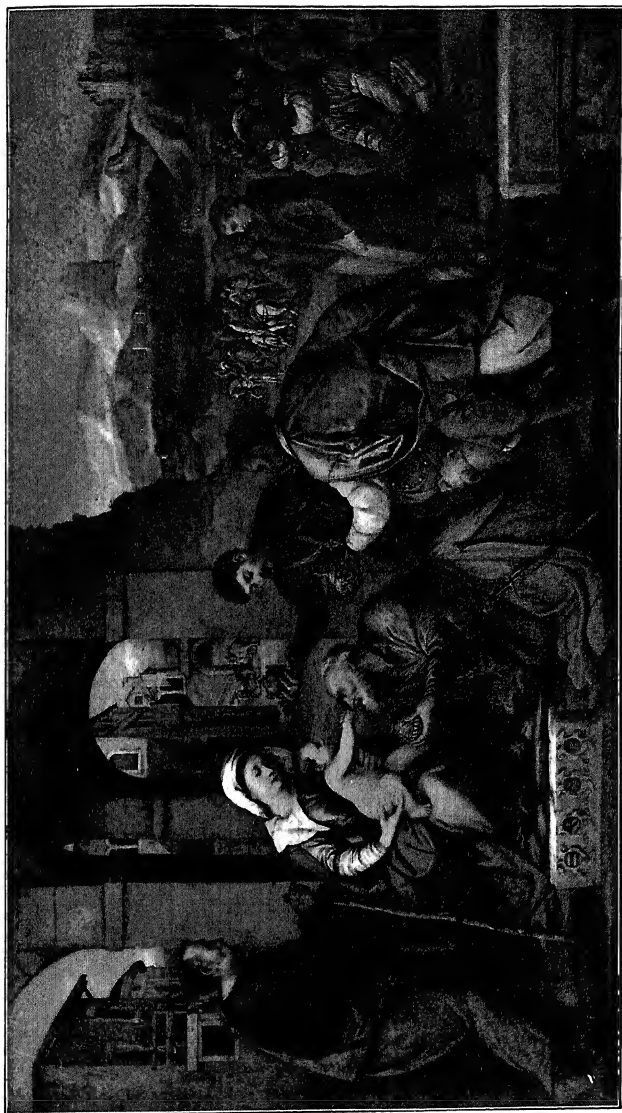
cobwebs that they permit little light to enter the edifice, but a Sultan's soldier's gun prevents them from being disturbed. The Greek priest must not be permitted to feel that his church "owns" the Church of the Nativity.

The church is believed by most of the scholars of the world to mark the abiding place of the Holy Mother that night when she arrived at the inn and found it so crowded that she was obliged to retire in the stable. It is certain from the account in the Scriptures that the inn was connected with a cave; that the inn was in the city, and it is certain that for at least a thousand years the place was used as an inn, and the site of Bethlehem has not changed with the passing of the ages. To enter the big church, one is obliged to stoop, because the main entrance is not more than five feet high and large enough to permit only one person to step in at a time. This part of the construction is comparatively modern and is devised to hold the crowds in check at times of big celebrations. The interior is marked with great simplicity, at first glance, for the floor is paved with big slabs of stone and the big stone columns rise to a roof made of wood sent here by an English king.

But this appearance of simplicity quickly changes when one descends into the Chapel of

the Nativity, which is situated beneath the choir and lighted by many silver and gold chandeliers. The steps are worn hollow with the passage of many pilgrims' feet and the descent is difficult. Under the altar to the east is the big silver star in the pavement marked: "Here was born Jesus Christ of the Virgin Mary." Around this small recess burn fifteen lamps, six belonging to the Greeks, five to the Armenians and four to the Latins. It is said that this sacred spot was highly decorated as far back as the time of Constantine. Opposite the recess is another small hole in the natural cave—perhaps five feet long—and approached by three slippery and much trodden steps. This is the chapel of the manger and is paved with white marble and faced with brown marble. Here also gold and silver lamps burn.

The walls of the big cavern are hung with costly tapestries. There are pictures representing Christ, the Virgin and Joseph, which contain many precious stones and much gold. It is a glittering cavern, gaudy and even spectacular, with its armed soldiers standing guard. Here is also the altar of the adoration of the Magi, which belongs to the Latins. There are parts of the cave where the innocents were killed by Herod's order. And there are many other



“ ADORATION OF THE MAGI. ” — FROM A PAINTING BY  
BONIFAZIO.



things, most of them unauthentic, which are shown to the visitor. One of the things that interested me in this place was a small hole in the wall where if one shut out the light with his hand, he could peep from the grotto controlled by the Latins to the cavern controlled by the Greeks and see what was going on—although the priests of one church are prohibited from entering the chapel of the other.

I was also impressed by a talkative American lady of eighty years who announced to every one in the dining-room at the hotel at Jerusalem when she arrived that she was “making a tour around the world alone.” She chanced to be in the Chapel of the Nativity when I was there and blankly inquired: “Well, where are my people represented?” after her dragoman had explained to her the various creeds and their tenure of this and that around the edifice.

“Who are your people?” asked the guide.

“I’m a Baptist, and I’m proud of it,” she said.

“I’m sorry,” he replied, after I explained the word’s meaning, “but there is nothing here belonging to the Protestant churches of the world, and you are not likely to find anything of consequence in Palestine.”

“Well, now, that’s peculiar,” commented the

lady, as she was assisted up the marble staircase.

She, like many others, went away from the Church of the Nativity with a feeling of regret that she had seen what she had seen. Doubtless in the courtyard she was hounded by all sorts of merchants and vendors of religious objects, besieged by some of the most persistent beggars in the world and annoyed to extinction until she entered her carriage for the ride back to Jerusalem. To all of these undesirables, I must add a man who, before I left the church, reminded me that he had lighted another taper so that I could see my way more plainly as I was going into the crypt. I had forgotten about him, and doubtless, he reminded me, I would like to make him a little "baksheesh" or gift for his thoughtfulness.

I stood in the paved court that forms a sort of public square in Bethlehem and looked up at the entrance to the church. It looks like the front of an ordinary brick building, but it is said the rich porch that once adorned it was torn away by heathen invaders, and the various factions of the Christian church have never been able to agree upon who should be permitted to make the repairs; thus they have never been made. But perhaps that is not remarkable

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when one recalls that the priest of one sect drove a nail into the wall to hold a picture. The other sects never let the picture be hung, because they had not been consulted about the driving of the nail. And the nail has not been withdrawn, because nobody will let any one else assume "ownership."

Just before Christmas each year there is a general understanding that everything may be cleaned—all excepting the windows with the cobwebs. Roman monks clean and dust what belongs to the Romans, and the Greeks and Armenians do likewise. If columns divide their respective territories the Roman priest may clean only to the middle of the column, while the Greek monk takes his side. Once the Armenians received a firman from the Sultan permitting them to hang a chain for a lamp in the church. They did so, but when they went to hang a lamp upon it a Greek monk knocked the Armenian off a ladder and he was badly injured. The Greek bishop was sent for and admitted that it was done by his orders. "The Sultan's order was for 'a chain for a lamp' and nothing was said about hanging a lamp on it," he replied in self-defence.

A minister of the Gospel might find many texts for sermons from a visit to the birthplace



of Christ. The casual tourist merely turns away from the place somewhat disappointed that things are as they are. And they are not likely to become any better with the passing of time. The Jaffa Gate at Jerusalem has been knocked out to permit of the entrance of tram cars into the Holy City. They will soon be humming along the way to the City of David and it will be possible to make the excursion in a few minutes. And the "personally conducted parties" will have a man with them who yells: "Look quickly, in that field David tended his father's sheep" and "Over there the shepherds saw the star of Bethlehem." At least I am glad that I came to Bethlehem ahead of the trolley.

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## CHAPTER VII

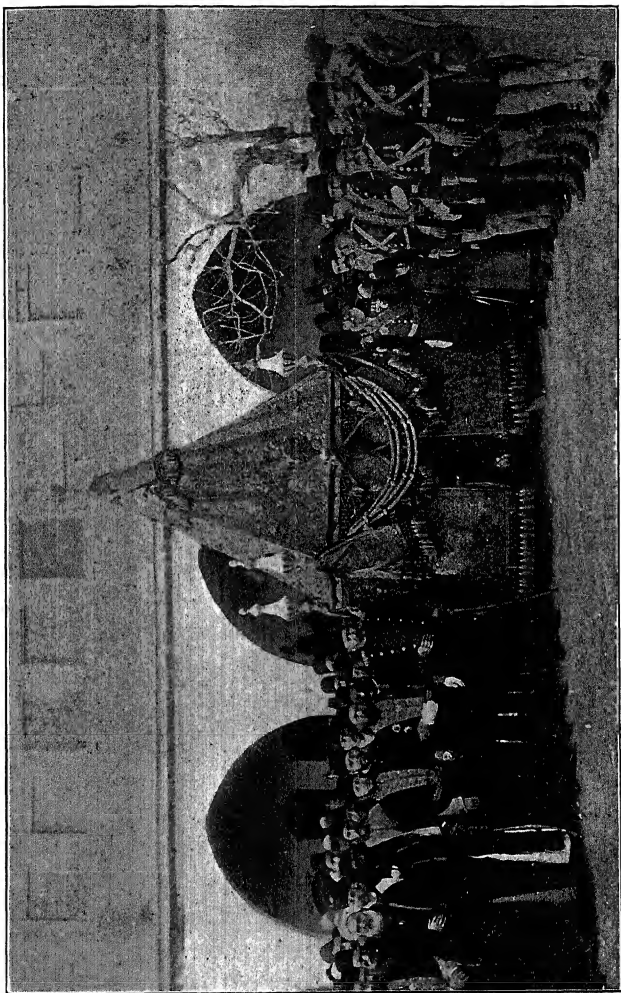
### THE VALE OF MAR SABA

**P**ALESTINE abounds in monasteries. Almost every hilltop seems to have a religious edifice upon it, and in about eight cases out of ten the tourist is told that these are the homes of this and that brotherhood, identified with such and such a church. At almost any hour of the day it is possible, almost any place in the country, to catch the peal of a bell. At Jerusalem they are clanging incessantly, and the immediate vicinity of the city seems to be about as noisy from the same cause. There is something in the air of Palestine that seems to breed religion, and it seems to have been so in those early centuries when men were experimenting with life on this planet. Three of the chief religions of the world had their birth here, and while the most recent of these is now old, the practice of religion of some sort or other seems to be one of the chief occupations of the country as it has been for centuries.

A large number of the monasteries, hospices

and institutions maintained by the various churches, are chiefly for the entertainment of pilgrims who come this way. Perhaps Russia heads the list with pilgrims of the Greek faith. They trudge along the road to this and that part of the country in a weary and rather pathetic procession, visiting monastery after monastery, where they are given bread, hot tea and a rather crude shelter from the night. Thus the monks at some of these places become almost hotel keepers who are so busy with earthly affairs that they cannot have much time to look out for the spiritual, which inmates of monasteries are usually supposed to do.

The Greek monks have become very rich and own much real estate, which they successfully operate. Some of their methods of accumulating money may be permissible because, without doubt, they relieve much suffering among their travel-stained visitors. Personally, I was unable to reconcile some of their practices with what they profess, but doubtless they act according to their lights. As one specific example, the Greek monks sell to pilgrims little flat cakes of chalky stone supposed to be effectual in increasing milk of women and animals. These stones are supposed to have been hewn from the rock which was turned to milky whiteness when a



THE HOLY CARPET LEAVING DAMASCUS FOR MECCA.



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drop of milk fell from the Holy Mother's breast as she was nursing her Child.

But Palestine is the very home of the ascetics of many beliefs. Throughout the ages there have been men here living in caves, wandering in the wilderness and half starving themselves. They are here still, or others are here to take their places. The rocky gorges around Jerusalem in several directions are the homes of these men and some of them are living in most unusual fashion. For example, some have risked their lives in crawling over rocky precipices and landing in crevasses or shelves high in the air, then refusing to leave their perches. There are several of them along the rocky valley that leads to the Jordan, and they are sustained with food and drink by monks who tie supplies to ropes and let them swing in baskets within reach of the recluses. And the Christians are not alone in religious practices strange among their own people in Palestine. There are Mohammedan practices in Syria unknown elsewhere in the Mohammedan world. For example, there is no other place where prayers are perpetually offered for the repose of a Mohammedan soul, and there are services attending the sending of the Holy Carpet to Mecca that are unknown elsewhere. And what is true of Christians and Mo-

ammedans, is also true of the Jews, some of whose ceremonials are practised only in Palestine, particularly that which relates to the return of the kingdom.

Between the two extremes, however, I was anxious to visit one of those more famous monasteries in Palestine, which are far enough from the crowd to have no appearance of being hotels. As Newman wanted photographs of the same sort of institution we settled upon Mar Saba, and one morning started out from Jerusalem on donkeys that are much more sure-footed than the Egyptian variety, and seem to be able to catch their balance after they are in midair and come down squarely upon four feet, after they have rolled and slipped over the miserable paths and trails that lead through the valleys and mountains.

Mar Saba is one of the most famous of all Palestine monasteries. It has been at the same place since the fifth century at any rate, and perhaps before, for the mountain passes are full of caves, some of which are chiselled out of the living rock high in the air, and it is known that these were inhabited by monks when the saintly Sabas came here and took up his residence in a hole in the rocks and remained there until he died.

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One can barely imagine anything so desolate and lonesome as this Wilderness of Judea, in the midst of which the big monastery of Mar Saba is perched or plastered on the side of a cliff. Almost immediately, after one plunges into the deep valley after leaving the city, everything seems to become primitive. The monks like to believe that up through this vale John the Baptist foretold the coming of Jesus Christ, and it is said that there were many inhabitants at one time; but people are gone now. We passed three or four men and perhaps the same number of women during the day, all struggling along the rocky trail and carrying bulky loads upon their heads. Probably they lived up there in the hills somewhere, perhaps in caves, but there are no visible signs of human habitations along the twelve-mile journey.

At the base of the city wall we came upon a threshing floor where four cows were treading upon grain, but soon we saw things even more primitive, for we saw women "threshing" the few heads of wheat which they had harvested from the rocky ledges along the trail, by gently beating them with stone mallets, while they tossed the kernels into the air with the chaff and picked up the grains of wheat, one by one and stored them away in a square cloth—perhaps



to assist them in avoiding starvation. It is a desperate struggle for existence in this valley. A few shepherds were driving their flocks of goats from hilltop to valley, but even these poor animals seemed to be half starved and walked along rapidly, looking from side to side, as if in search of green weeds or branches which were not there.

You are told that Mar Saba is only twelve miles along this trail, but you think you have gone twenty miles before you have reached half of the way. It seems to be about the most unattractive scramble over and among the rocks in the world. The sun pours its piercing heat into the valleys and they, like the mountain tops, are parched and dry. Sometimes one is reminded of the Grand Canyon of the Colorado, so far as the landscape is concerned, but the colours are lacking. All is grey, a dust brown and white. Everything looks bleached and roasted.

As a reward for hours of this tedious scramble for foot room, one sees finally the fine monastery half way up a precipitous embankment. There is a stairway cut into the natural wall, and leaving the donkeys behind, we climbed up this and rang the big bell, which was answered by a jolly little monk, who chattered something in Greek, which meant that he was



IN THE VALLEY NEAR MAR SABA.



satisfied with us and would permit us to enter, although the guide-books warn travellers not to approach Mar Saba without credentials from Jerusalem, as the monks are likely to keep their doors closed upon strangers who are not vouched for by the authorities. We told him that we did not understand Greek, but were Americans who would like to spend the day in the monastery.

“Very welcome,” he said in perfect English. “I, too, am from America—or that is, I spent three years in San Francisco before I came here.”

San Francisco—Mar Saba! It was a greater distance than the human mind is capable of grasping, not in miles, perhaps, but in the general outlook upon life. We were shown to a plain sitting-room, where we were soon told that some sort of a meal was being prepared for us. “We eat no meat,” said the monk, “so you will have none, but we have a few vegetables and some black bread and coffee. You are welcome to what we have.” Immediately he placed on the table before us a decanter and glasses and told us to refresh ourselves from our journey. But one unused to the peculiar concoction placed before us must be very tired and thirsty before he could drink it. Greek wine it was in reality,

but it tasted like thin varnish, so our "refreshment" came from a storage tank of rain-water. Doubtless he had placed the drink before other travellers who had not enjoyed it, for he laughed as we pushed it aside, and soon hustled away, leaving us to make a survey from the windows which look out over the deep ravine. We could see that in addition to the principal building of the monastery little steps were cut in the rock, leading to all sorts of perches and caves, some of which are now screened by corrugated iron or tile. In these little cells about fifty monks were usually confined, spending the days and nights in prayer and fasting. Theirs is a difficult life, for they live according to the rules laid down by St. Basilus. They know not the sight of a woman, for no woman comes nearer than the little tower on a near by hill. They do not frequently hear one another's voices excepting in chanting and prayer. They assemble at midnight in the chapel, and they assemble so many other times during the day and night that it keeps the man who rings the bell occupied.

I went out and sat in the little courtyard when the bell rang to watch them come from their lofty perches. A few dwarfed fig trees provided shade. Suddenly black robes began to move all over the face of the rocks, as the

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priests and monks started on their descent to the chapel.

"It must be a very unhealthy life," I remarked to the monk who had received me at the door.

The jolly little fellow laughed again, as he did each time that I asked what doubtless seemed to him to be an absurd question. "Wait a moment," he said, as he quickly ran toward the chapel and touched a monk on the shoulder, who was assisting another who was leaning on a cane. Slowly the three came back toward me. "This brother is one hundred and one years of age, and he has spent most of his time here," said the monk, and probably he had told the other man, for the latter smiled dimly and held out his hand for me to clasp. We told the old fellow that we would like to take his photograph, and he seemed to be pleased. We showed him a rock to sit on, and he sent one of the monks to his room to get a better looking scarf to drape over his tall Greek cap. It was unnecessary to tell him to "look pleasant" or to attempt to pose him for a photograph. He knew exactly what he wanted and when a prayer-book was handed to him at his request, he opened it, placed his rosary just where he wanted it to hang over his hand and then smil-

ingly said that he was ready. Yet here was a man who had been in a convent for over sixty years and knew or cared very little about the outside world.

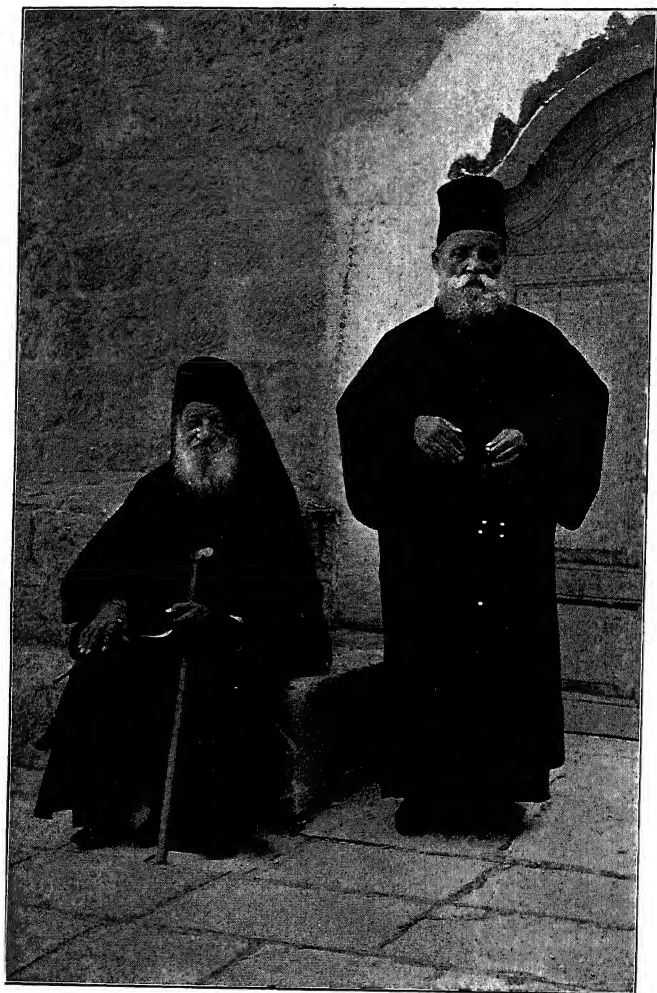
After the camera had snapped, he muttered something in Greek and the younger man interpreted:

“The brother says that he would appreciate it if you would send him a photograph of himself.”

This conversation seemed to be something of an innovation, perhaps as a favour to the centenarian, for the others all passed along slowly and paid not the slightest attention to us or to each other. Before they entered the chapel they went into the tomb of St. Saba to pray, and they went so frequently that became almost “perpetual adoration.” There are wire gratings in the walls which hold back the skulls of the monks who were murdered when the Persians plundered the monastery in the year 614.

“When you come over this road from Jerusalem you are likely to stay here until you die?” I asked.

“Yes, and then—” he pointed to the big paving-stones that cover the courtyard, and walking over to a big stone trap door he explained that this opened when one of the number dies



MONKS OF MAR SABA.





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and his remains are placed therein, with his brothers of many centuries.

“You wouldn’t want to live to be one hundred years old, the way that old man has?” I asked the middle-aged monk who brought a Russian samovar and made us some tea, although he partook of none.

“Why not?” he inquired in reply to my inquiry, and I could not make an answer to his question.

Mar Saba used to be much more popular with travellers than it is at present. There was a more agreeable route from the Dead Sea, and it was also visited by pilgrims to Bethlehem. But the monks have discouraged visitors, so that the tourist agencies suggest to their clients a half-hearted welcome or refusal of admittance altogether, and, as it is the only hospice for many miles, people do not care to risk not being admitted when they make the journey thither. Mark Twain came here before he wrote “Innocents Abroad” and he has a good word to say for the inmates of Mar Saba, although he couldn’t find much good to say about most of the things he met with in Palestine.

And we are glad to add our testimony concerning the hospitality of the cliff-dwellers over the Valley of Kidron. Before we left, a monk

descended a precipitous rock to about three square yards of soil where he had a little garden. Here were a fig tree and a few plants that looked like our candytuft. He picked a few sprigs and handed them to us before the monastery gate lock swung into place and we started on our return journey.

## CHAPTER VIII

### JERICHO AND THE JORDAN

WE spent Sunday on the banks of the Dead Sea and the River Jordan, chiefly, perhaps, because there was a sentimental interest in saying that we had been there, and although I have had some breathless, scorched and terrible days in the desert within the not far distant past, there was never a day, Sunday or otherwise, that was so absolutely unbearable, so utterly miserable as that day in Jericho and its environs.

I had been warned by the dejected-looking proprietor of the hotel the night before that I had better start for the sea early in the morning if I wanted to reach it alive—or at least in a condition to enjoy a bath in its salty waters, because he declared that the region was suffering from unusually hot weather, which I could not fully appreciate because I had made a descent from Jerusalem, which is high enough to be cool most of the year, and I had arrived in the

evening, after the sun had ceased to burn and blister all that it touched.

So I heeded the advice. At 5 o'clock I was on my way to the sea, and before the sun had barely peeped over the Land of Moab and Nebo's lonely mountain, where Moses was buried by the Lord in a grave that no man has found to this day, I was floating on top of the blue water. This was exhilarating and bracing, a good preparation for what was to come, but I had scarcely reached the shady retreat on the sands of the sea, made by a weird old creature who runs around with a big knife in his belt and seems to imagine that he is the policeman of the place, than I began to realize what the "spell of hot weather" really was, of which the hotel man had spoken.

Rapidly the thermometer began to rise, and it continued to rise until it reached 108 degrees. Then it stayed at that point. Everything around the sea seemed to be dead and burned up. The mountains—even those peaks which one wanted to observe from this point of view—seemed hazy and very far distant, owing to a series of circles around the sun caused by the heat. The air seemed oily and seemed to be moving in curves. The white beaches of the sea stretch back far inland to

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white sands and dunes. Nothing grows but sage brush and greasewood—the thorny stuff that is said to have been used for making the crown of thorns that was placed upon the head of Jesus Christ at the time of the crucifixion. Verily, in addition to being the lowest spot on earth, the sea, one thousand two hundred and ninety-two feet below the level of the Mediterranean when it is at its normal depth, is the sink of the earth.

The water of the Dead Sea is blue and sparkles when held in a glass in the sunlight, but is not suitable for drinking purposes, for in addition to tasting like the strongest brine ever made, it contains such a large proportion of various salts and minerals that a big concern from the United States is now locating a plant on its shores for the purpose of evaporating it for substances to be found in it. No fish can live in the Dead Sea. It is said that some sort of a jellyfish has been found crawling around its shores, but the ordinary catfish, which thrives in the Jordan, gives a few gasps and expires—if it ventures too far down stream. It is estimated that over six million tons of water is received into the sea every day from the Jordan and smaller streams, but there is no outlet. It is just a gigantic basin, forty-seven miles in

length and varying from two to nine miles in width, where the sun beats upon it and has beaten upon it for ages, causing intense evaporation, which in turn causes the haze or mist that hangs over it. Off in the distance some miles, but appearing to be on its banks, is the big Greek monastery of St. John the Baptist, for here, too, John, the Messenger and Fore-runner of Christ, is supposed to have dwelt in the wilderness. Then there is the "retreat" aforementioned, built of sticks poked into the sands, covered with reeds and then smeared with mud. These are the only human habitations in sight. Death seems to be everywhere. Quite appropriately the place is called the Dead Sea.

As I was thinking of the utter desolation of the place, and trying to imagine that I was breathing air from the hot gusts that floated along, when there were gusts at all, I saw a figure moving in the distance. At least here was life, so I watched the figure as it became plainer and plainer. It was a boy of Jericho, who had walked five miles to where the Jordan empties into the sea, for the purpose of catching a fish. He had a big catfish (the fish with whiskers of the Roman historians) which he had captured an hour before. The method

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seemed to be unique, as he related it to the dragoman. He merely sat in the sand until he saw a fish gasping in the salt brine and then he waded out and gave it a hit over the head with a club. For relating his story the boy asked that we give him a ride back to Jericho, and because eight miles seemed to be a long walk for a single fish, and because his seemed to be a unique method of earning a ride, I told him to hop into the wagon for the backward journey.

During the rainy season, the Dead Sea overflows the sands of its shores and spreads into a large basin surrounding it, which naturally become a brackish marsh. The brine is so strong even here that during the dry season, which is in summer, there are patches of rock salt several yards square on the sand. There are large beds of asphalt at the bottom of the sea and small lumps of bitumin float on the surface and are picked up by the miserable creatures who live in the mud huts, for sale to tourists.

Much has been written of the strange saltiness of Dead Sea water, but most of the claims, which seem to be rather extravagant statements, are easily verified at the present time by one who floats on its waters—an egg will float there almost entirely above the surface—but it is not



so easy to understand some of the scriptural references to the region as "a land well watered as the garden of the Lord." In Genesis we read of the "slime pits" while the longing eyes of Moses saw a fertile country "like unto Egypt." But it is far different now, although there is a good reason to believe that the climate has changed even since the days of the Roman occupation, for Jericho, once "the city of palms," is now a furnace, and one looks in vain for the "cities of the plains." Even the sites of Sodom, Gomorrah, Adnahm, Zebolim and Zoar have disappeared, and while some archæologists have argued that they lie at the bottom of the Dead Sea, this theory can scarcely be maintained. Probably they stood somewhere in this present sink, for certainly the land looks as if it had been visited by fire and brimstone.

A big pillar of salt stood by the Dead Sea for a long time, and this was pointed out to tourists as the remains of Lot's wife, but our guide said that even the pillar has tumbled into the sea now, and some of the ruins that once stood upon the sands have toppled from sight. Probably they were the ruins of hermitages, for it is unlikely that cities existed here since the climate assumed its present horrors—for the old

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men beside the sea assured us that the thermometer frequently mounts to one hundred and eighteen degrees, and said that we had no reason to complain because it was a mere one hundred and eight.

Many myths and much superstition has hung about the region from earliest days. It has been declared that birds which attempt to fly over the sea are poisoned by the exhalations of the water. Yet the region has been recommended to victims of tuberculosis, and many of them have derived some benefit from it in the winter season. An American who made a survey here about fifty years ago dispelled many of the illusions in regard to the place, but certain points even he could not reconcile to Scripture. The theory had been that the "five cities" were destroyed by volcanoes, but geologists say there have never been active volcanoes in the region, and, if anything, they believe that the water level of the sea was perhaps a thousand feet higher in olden times than at present. Thus survives here one of the puzzles most difficult for students of the Bible in all Palestine.

The air here is very clear and distances are deceptive. It is possible to look from the sands of the sea far away to the Mount of Olives by

Jerusalem, just as it is possible to look down from the Mount of Olives and see the blue waters of the Dead Sea. But it is a hard half day's ride by wagon, and the tourist is fortunate, perhaps, if he make the climb back to Jerusalem in a half day. It is an interesting, if a rather hard ride. One meets many strange characters from "beyond Jordan" along the road. They are bringing their produce up to Jerusalem or returning with foodstuffs which they have procured in the city in exchange for the bundles of truck which they have brought upon the backs of camels or donkeys. Most of the men have very dark complexions, some of them pure Nubians. Many of them are evil characters, and in the earlier days they made the road a terror to travellers, but they pass along now and either pretend not to notice the people they pass or openly sneer as they trudge along over the rocks and hiss something about "infidels" and "unbelievers," for they consider every one who journeys toward the Jordan a pilgrim, and most of them hate Christians with a deadly hatred.

On the trip down one passes the ancient city of Bethany, which was a favourite resort of Jesus Christ. It was here that He was anointed with precious ointment (Matt. xxvi:6); here



“CHRIST AT THE HOME OF MARY AND MARTHA.” — FROM A PAINTING BY SIEMIRADSKI.



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that He raised Lazarus, and here was also the home of Mary and Martha. The sites are pointed out to tourists to-day, even the cave in which the body of Lazarus was laid. But it is a poor little rock and mud village to-day, and we were so pestered with children begging for "baksheesh" that we were glad to be on our way. It is quite likely that the site of Bethany has remained unchanged, and it was this hill that the Saviour must have passed several times on His journeys to and from the capital city. Perhaps even the "tomb of Lazarus" is correct, for the spot has many authentic traditions, but the town of Bethany is to-day in a miserable state of decay, both as regards its buildings and its inhabitants. The stone where Martha met Jesus (John xi: 20) is inclosed in a Greek chapel. Maybe it is authentic. Nobody may say for a certainty.

One prefers to pass along to what is known as the Apostles' Pool. Certainly, from ancient times, it has been visited by wayfarers between Jericho and Jerusalem, so it is safe to assume that it was often visited by Jesus Christ and His apostles. It lies in a valley and is inclosed in a tomb-like structure with a dome painted white. Pilgrims stop here and drink of the water, but this is not recommended to visitors,

because the water is not pure, and it is better for the pious to carry it away in the bottles provided for the purpose, for baptism.

A little further along we stop at a khan for cool bottled drinks or coffee. The place is known as the Good Samaritan Inn, and tradition localizes here the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke x: 30-37). It is an ancient khan, a favourite stopping-place for drivers, and usually the horses and other animals are fed and watered here. The old man who lives here has put in a stock of shepherd's slings, pipes and camel bells, most of which are imitations, but eagerly purchased by pilgrims, who also indulge in warm bottled waters and fresh lemons. Travellers like to stop here on account of the associations of the name. Thus the entire drive is vibrant with interest because it leads along a route immortalized by the Old and New Testament writers. Perhaps discrepancies have crept in with regard to exact spots, but mountains, valleys, rocks and hills do not change. It is a trail often followed by the world's saints and sinners, otherwise it would be thankless to the tourist.

So much has been written of the brown river Jordan, leading one to suspect that it is a sluggish, creeklike stream that flows along from the

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Sea of Galilee to the Dead Sea, that I am glad to be able to testify that I found it much different from what had been implied by the descriptions of many writers.

Although the Jordan flows through a country of unprecedented barrenness and chalk-white, baked sand, its banks are extremely fertile, and are lined with towering trees and thickly matted shrubbery. Its colour is brown, but not because it hesitates in its flow toward the sink of the Dead Sea. It is one hundred and sixty miles long, and wriggles back and forth across country instead of going in anything like a straight line. It drops rapidly and flows swiftly, carrying with it much of the mud that lines its banks. Thus it becomes brown soon after it leaves the cliffs of Lebanon, and it swirls along past high banks, carrying much of the debris and decayed foliage with it. But Jordan water, as it passes through the rather primitive distilling process of native earthen jars, becomes clear and sweet, and is much desired by thirsty pilgrims who have made the hot journey over the sands from Jericho. It is sold in little bottles and tin cans by the Greeks, and is in great demand for souvenirs and baptismal purposes and carried away by the gallon.

The practice of being baptized in the Jordan



is not so prevalent as it was formerly, and is now chiefly indulged in by the Russian peasants—and thereto hangs a story, one of many stories which were related to me on the banks of the Jordan one day by Khalil Jarvis, a Syrian photographer from Jerusalem, who happened to be in the region on that scorching Sabbath which I spent around Jericho.

“I can’t say that people have exactly lost interest in the Jordan, for as many of them come here as ever,” he related, “but people are not so anxious to be photographed on the banks of the river as formerly. When I was a younger man my life was much like that of the family physician. I was called at all times of the day and night to get ready immediately and accompany people to the Jordan to photograph them beside its waters. Sometimes, when I have been very tired, I have hesitated, but they wouldn’t take no for an answer, and I have frequently received as much as \$50 for making the trip from Jerusalem and photographing an entire family or party under a mimosa tree on the banks of the stream. You think I look at this in a rather commercial way? Well, let me tell you of a Protestant minister who lived in Jerusalem. He had no regular congregation and remained in Jerusalem for the purpose of

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coming down here to baptize pilgrims in the Jordan. They paid him such handsome fees for his services that he retired, or at least he moved away—and now there is such a small demand for a like service that nobody has come to take his place.”

As we sat under a large willow-tree that bends over the river at the spot formerly occupied by the Greek church, and where the Patriarch of Jerusalem dips the cross in the waters of the Jordan every year—the spot which is now generally accepted as that at which Jesus Christ was baptized—a long train of camels was passing along the trail by the Dead Sea toward Jericho, and this prompted many tales of the “people beyond Jordan,” whose folklore has not changed much with the passing of the centuries. Jarvis has had many dealings with them, as he has made many tours of the country for a London firm, and being able to converse with them in their own language he has won the confidence of many of them. I expressed a desire to hear one of the stories that are told around the Bedouin tents at night, one of those stories which have not found their way into print, but pass along from generation to generation and from century to century by word of mouth.

“I can tell you one,” said Jarvis, “just as

it was related to me by the sheik, Mohammed Ali, well known in his part of the country. It is one of their oldest stories," he assured me, "and is fairly typical of the 'gospel,' the way it is preached in desert tents, when men lie around in the moonlight and drowsily listen to the 'professional entertainer' of the evening. It is the story of the sheik who gave everything away, which may not be wise, but proves that he who gives much will prosper much. Once upon a time there was a sheik who had the reputation for giving away whatever was asked of him. Another sheik who wanted to test his generosity, attired himself like a poor Arab musician, outfitted a camel with two drums and started to pay a visit to the generous sheik. He travelled twenty days and came to a large number of tents. Inquiring for the tent of the sheik, he went before him, knelt and in the manner of the desert men, said that he was penniless and had a great request to make. The good sheik ordered wine to be placed before him, gave him good clothes and had a sheep roasted in his honour, promising to grant any request that he made. 'Give me your favourite wife,' said the visitor. Immediately there was lamentation in the camp, but, after much weeping, the wife was brought forward, given to the stranger and told

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to go, because the sheik said that he must keep his word, and he had never refused any man's request.

“When the visitor and the wife had passed beyond the nearest hill, he turned to the woman and said: ‘I, too, am a great sheik in my own country and I do not want you to go with me. Here, put this ring on your finger and go back to your husband. I am your brother and his brother. When the time comes, as it surely will come, that he is penniless, because he gives away everything, come to me and I will reward him for his generosity. And bad times came. The sheik gave away so much that his people distrusted him and thought he would bring ruin upon them. So one night they all left him. When the good sheik awakened in the morning, he and his wife were left alone with one horse. As the good man looked out over the desert in despair, his wife said: ‘Remember our brother whom we thought was a musician.’ So they journeyed twenty days and found his tents. The sheik saw them coming from afar and went to meet them. He told them that he had expected them and that they were welcome. He called for his wife and commanded her to give her finest raiment to his sister. Then, as they were childless, he gave to the husband a

younger wife and she bore him many children—the greatest prize of the desert man. Then, after he had given him rich stores and a complete outfit to begin life anew, with his position as sheik still maintained, he sent him away, proving that the example of generosity had borne good fruit.”

This little story has been told many times in modern fiction, but it was particularly interesting to hear it related, in the vicinity of where it had its origin and where it has never been read but has come down through the centuries from father to son by word of mouth.

Suddenly we heard a man's voice singing. “One of the Greeks,” said Jarvis, and he had no sooner spoken than a rowboat came around the bend in the river, propelled by a smiling Greek, who seemed to be embarrassed when he realized that his retreat had been intruded upon and that we had heard his voice. He pulled his little boat up to the shore and offered to take us for a ride, so we jumped in and were soon paddling along beneath the shade of the trees that lean over the river and make it seem as cool as any river at home. The Greek told us that he had come here three years ago as a pilgrim. He liked the place so well that he decided to stay and since then he has been joined

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by three or four of his countrymen, who live in a rather rude hut and make their living by taking people for rides on the Jordan River. Just how the staunch little boats ever reached this place we didn't ask him, but perhaps they were brought down the river from Galilee.

It is not a great distance between the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea, but the Jordan covers something like two hundred and twelve miles in zigzagging through something like sixty miles. It is narrow, varying between sixty and one hundred feet in width, but its valley sometimes reaches out eight miles and is extremely fertile, although forbidding mountains and the desert then close upon it and make it difficult to reach. I believe that the Zionists have tried to gain possession of the valley several times, believing that it would be possible to irrigate it by canals, so that the land would certainly pay a handsome profit; but there was some trouble with the Turkish authorities and the matter seems to have been dropped, while the colonists flocked to other places, where the land was less fertile.

Further up the river, the Sultan of Turkey had a private estate, which he worked with soldier labour and raised sugar cane. But the rest of the land is not cultivated. It merely lies and

bakes in the sun and seems to be as wild as that in our most distant West.

It may surprise many people to learn that there is still a considerable fauna lurking in the bushes along the Jordan. Within recent years many large hyenas have been caught there—but for that matter, hyenas have been seen within the last three years in the ruins of the foundation walls of Jerusalem! The valley is full of jackals, which bark a merry chorus at night and are easily heard through one's open window at the hotel in Jericho. There are also a few wolves and many smaller animals on the bank of this, certainly one of the oldest streams in the world and the most famous river in history.

Elisha told Naaman the leper to "go and wash in Jordan," for to the Jews it seems to have been always a holy river. It was natural, for this reason, if for no other, that John the Baptist selected it as the theatre of his ministry and here baptized Jesus Christ, whose religion was to cover the face of the earth.

It is difficult to tell just how ancient people crossed its waters, for until the Romans came there were no bridges, and the water is deep and has a heavy current. The crossing of Jordan must have been as great a problem to the

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Children of Israel as the crossing of the Red Sea. Herod is said to have thrown many bridges across the river, but only two now remain in its entire distance of two hundred and twelve miles, which is a quite fair example of what is done by the Turkish government for its citizens.

The pilgrims who come here in droves of thousands every year, mostly from Russia, solemnly undress on the steep banks and slide into the river, for the government has not even provided a suitable place for them to approach the water. There is a little stepladder built of willow branches which the Greek has provided for his passengers to enter rowboats, but beyond this there is no assistance to one who would plunge into the water. Doubtless it was not always thus, for old writers tell of the time when the bank of the river at the point where Jesus was baptized was paved with blocks of marble, doubtless with steps leading into the water. But now the place is in a sad state of neglect. The surroundings are as desolate as on any river in Colorado. All other holy places in the world seem to have been marked in the some way, but the Jordan is still just a muddy stream flowing between thick mats of shrubbery and trees in a white rock wilderness.



There are three Jerichos, all lying in that sickly depression of the mountains, known as the Judean Wilderness. As one comes over the mountains he fancies that he is to enjoy a somewhat easy "slide" into the valley of the Jordan. It has been hard climbing for many hours and now that Jericho, a veritable oasis, looms in the distance, the tourist is likely to imagine that his troubles are over. Soon he will be on the balcony of a hotel in the shade. But these are vain delusions. The coachman of the Palestine wagon in which travellers must make the journey turns around and quite unabashed informs his passengers that they have arrived at the place to begin to walk. The road is too rocky now, he declares, and, when protests are made, he declares that even he walks, because he cannot stand the tossing about of the wagon. And if a Palestine driver cannot stand it to remain in his wagon while he is crossing certain stretches of the road, it's a very good hint to strangers that they had not better attempt to do so. So we started afoot down the mountainside, which is piled so full of sharp rocks and boulders that it seems as if they had been sprinkled over the landscape from the sky. It is difficult to make much progress, for it was even more difficult for the horses

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and wagon in the road. We could see the animals slipping and sliding to their knees and the wagon careening and tossing about as if it were on a stormy sea and we were glad that we had heeded the driver's advice—or command.

Jericho is eight hundred and twelve feet below the sea level, and when that depth is approached by a rocky footpath from a mountain-top it becomes a trying distance, in view of the terrific heat. But there is a certain compensation in coming upon mounds of ruins which would have otherwise passed unnoticed. There is one gigantic pile of huge stones, now partially covered with earth and debris, which it is believed was Herod's palace. Near by the ancient aqueduct which brought water to the Roman city from the mountains in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, bursts the solid rock and runs for several yards into the air before it falls off precipitately, having been mowed down by time. Off there to the left is the ancient Jericho (Joshua v:13) which fell at the sound of the trumpets and was never rebuilt. In the other direction, and nearer at hand, are the ruins of the Roman city, for Antony gave Jericho to Cleopatra, and she in turn sold it to Herod, who embellished it with palaces and made of it a show place of Palestine. Between

the two, and further away, is the modern Jericho, a filthy town with the worst people in Palestine living in it—ugly, fanatical, diseased and depraved. They have lost all energy in the enervating climate, or their ancestors lost it for them long ago, and they have degenerated into a wretched community which declines to live by honest labour, and consequently seems to merely exist.

It was early morning when we arrived in the ancient city, and I shall never forget the sight afforded by its inhabitants. The fashion in Jericho at present is to sleep out of doors, because it is too hot and the houses are too dirty to afford a comfortable shelter. Four sticks are driven into the ground in front of each mud hut, over which trees usually afford some shade. Across the sticks, slats or ropes are laid and reed mats are placed over the top. On these beds Jericho sleeps, and as we came along the road it seemed that the whole town sat up in bed and looked at us. A few women were attempting to cook coffee over a tiny charcoal fire between stones, which forms the usual family cook stove of Jericho, but their worthy lords and masters were remaining "in bed," and seemed to be disturbed because strangers had arrived. Just how these people live is some-

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thing of a problem. They beg from tourists, and they run in front of the wagons arriving from Jerusalem and pretend to execute little fantasias or dances, which are awkward and displeasing. But they expect "baksheesh" all the same and follow along for almost any distance, until they are rewarded for their pains.

In a given number of people I never saw so many cripples, blind persons and human beings otherwise afflicted. A lady in Jerusalem, connected with the American colony, says that when examining physicians were sent down to Jericho by the missionaries and a free dispensary opened, there were three hundred applicants for treatment the first day and nearly every patient was suffering from some loathsome disease. This was practically the entire population of the town; but this is explained by the fact that several Beduins from over Jordan happened to be in the town and were among the number. Little girls, poorly clad and thin and hungry looking, dragged eighteen-inch-long feet through the dust of the road as they pleaded for alms. They were sufferers from elephantiasis in its worst form. The sight was appalling, and just as we were wondering what sort of a place we had come to, we saw the hotel sign, and the

Jordan waters were never more welcome to a thirsty pilgrim than was this sign to us.

And a still more surprising thing is that it is a splendid little hotel, built so that all four sides look out upon a beautiful courtyard in the Moorish style. Within this court there is a suggestion of what vegetation is possible in the Jordan Valley, what vegetation may have been flourishing here when Jericho was known as "the city of palms" and the cooling fronds of the date-tree waved over palaces and temples. Beside the balcony at my door a huge jasmine vine waves its delicate leaves and fragrant flowers. There is the largest oleander tree in this garden I have ever seen, as it must measure at least two feet in circumference at the base of the stump. It was loaded with a mass of pink flowers. There were large mimosa trees, several acacias, a few bananas, bougainvillæa and other tropical growths. In the midst of the squalor of Jericho we had found a tropical refuge of rare beauty.

We were the only guests at the hotel, so I asked the proprietor why he lived there. "Haven't got money enough to get away. I own this little hotel and I must stay here and run it," was his reply. Then he said something about the Jericho climate that wouldn't look

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well in print, and he admitted that during August and September it becomes so intolerable that he is in the habit of sitting out in his garden, smoking and talking with the servants all night, for night is as hot as day and it is impossible to sleep.

It is quite likely that the climate of Jericho has materially changed since the Christian era began, perhaps due to the neglect of tree culture and the modern lack of rain. It seems barely possible that Herod the Great would have made such a splendid city as it once was in such a sinkhole, and from contemporary accounts we know that he lived and died amid his gardens of dates, oranges and pomegranates, so at least the place possessed a splendid physical aspect during his reign. The Greek Church, which has several monasteries in the region, is now attempting to revive the culture of date palms and has planted many of them as an experiment. A few German settlers have come into the region and have met great success in raising lemons and oranges. But they must find it a rather desperate existence. They can work but a few hours a day early and late on account of the heat. The rest of the time they sit in their little white stone houses, surrounded by piles of thorn-bush, which are used for hedges

or fences, and which appear to be almost hot enough to begin to blaze.

Once Jericho had towers, gates, a theatre and many artistic beauties borrowed from Greece, including a university that acquired considerable renown. It was from that Jericho that Jesus Christ set out on His last trip to Jerusalem. He stayed with Zacceus or Zacchæus, a little fellow who wanted to see the New Prophet and climbed a tree so that he could look over the heads of the curious multitude. This Zacchæus was a tax-collector for the Roman government and therefore abhorred by the Jews, so that when Jesus called him to come down from the tree and be His host much dissatisfaction was felt throughout the city. A tree that used to stand in the centre of the city was pointed out to visitors as the identical one which the tax-collector climbed, and pious pilgrims used to carry away its leaves as souvenirs; but the tree is gone now, and the "governor" of the town lives in a house erected over the spot. It is a doubtful honour to be the governor of such a community, but probably it is not considered so here, for one evening, in the hotel garden, I was presented to his honour, who was introduced with all of his flaming title, and he acted as if he felt his dignity. He was a middle-aged, big-tur-

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banned and white baggy trousered individual with greyish whiskers, who looked much like the natives of the town that he governs.

But while Jericho is too terrible to be described, its environs are not only interesting, but delightful. One evening I strolled along the country roads just about sunset, for the purpose of visiting Elisha's Spring, which was turned from bitter water to sweet by throwing salt into it (II Kings ii:19-22). The water is still "sweet" and runs freely as it did in the days of old. The inhabitants from far and near still come to it for their supply, and the Germans have piped the overflow into their orange gardens. Two large pools have now been constructed of masonry, so that the clear water looks much like bathing pools, and, in fact, it is that very thing, for I had no sooner taken a tumbler of the water from the hands of a little girl who had come to fill a big earthen jar which she carried on her head, than two shepherds, who were watering their sheep, suddenly threw off their outer garments—which also served as undergarments—and plunged into the water. I sat down and watched the tired, dusty procession that came to the spring to obtain water for the night. The people paid no attention to the shepherds, but calmly filled their jars and went



back to town. A man threw a muddy sheep over into the pool to wash it, but still the water carriers paid no attention. Either they had no time to wait for the water to "settle" or they didn't care. Elisha's Spring is a blessing in this land that seems accursed. A cool stream of good water flows from it the year around; for miles there is no other water fit to drink.

They are building a telegraph line of one wire from Jericho to Jerusalem, and it is now almost completed, which will connect the ancient capital of Solomon. The cause of this action on the part of the Turkish government was because the people of Jericho frequently riot, abuse pilgrims and go on a general rampage. It is now believed that when they do this, a "ticker" to Jerusalem will send troops hither in short order—and that knowledge of the telegraph wire will frighten the inhabitants of the wicked town into something like decent behaviour.

We waited until the "cool of the evening," which never comes at Jericho, before we started for Jerusalem. After we had gone about ten miles we looked ahead in the dim moonlight and saw the white rocky roadway full of moving black figures, which at first we took to be goats. As they came nearer we saw that it was a crowd of Russian pilgrims bound for the Jordan.

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They were walking along slowly and silently, led by a priest. They carried their necessities of life in handkerchiefs swung over canes and clubs on their shoulders. As they came nearer and passed us, we saw that many of them were old men and women. They seemed sad and dejected, weary and sore. Some of the women were sobbing and murmuring prayers as they walked. At the break of day they lie down in the shadow of rocks and rest. At night they walk. And they live on tea and biscuits which they carry with them. Reaching the Jordan, they will plunge in its waters, and kiss the ground as they do at every place they believe the feet of Jesus travelled. Then they will start along to another point, perhaps enduring the hardship, for many of them—most of them—are hardy peasants, but many fall by the wayside and die as a result of the trying ordeal. We saluted them, but they did not look up, not one of them, and passed along prayerfully—almost reverently touching the paths with their feet, for they felt that Jesus had passed along this road.

## CHAPTER IX

### IN THE HOLY CITY

**J**ERUSALEM is a city numbering seventy thousand inhabitants, but it is a city divided against itself. There seems to be no such thing as civic pride or anything that is akin to civic pride. It is the home of all of the sects and isms of Christendom, but they all seem to be warring against each other. One sect and the people of one nation live in one quarter of the city, and the others do likewise. There are few occasions, when Moslem meets Greek, or when European resident meets native, on anything like terms of equality. Every one holds himself aloof from somebody else, and knows that he is right, while all the others are wrong. Such quarrels and quibblings would be intolerable anywhere else in the world. But this is Jerusalem, and people who know the Holy City well expect nothing else but eternal strife and evidences of prejudice. Consequently, in this celebrated city there are no amusements of any kind, although naturally a large percent.

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of the population is merely resident in Jerusalem and engaged in the various commercial pursuits that are necessary to the life of the others. It is true that there are many priests, monks, nuns and ministers of all denominations who trudge into the city to buy the vegetables for convents, monasteries, hospices and dozens of religious edifices that seem to cover the city and dot all the surrounding hills, men and women whose lives are strictly given over to devotional exercises; but it is also true that there is a large population that does not live within cloistered walls. But for this population there is absolutely no amusement of any kind. There are no parks, and there are no theatres, no concerts, no public libraries, no clubs, no lectures—no place for the young men of the city to go, excepting to cafés where they sit and drink coffee and play checkers. There are no tea parties for the ladies. Absolutely no diversions. At nine o'clock at night the city seems as silent as a tomb. One night I returned to the hotel at nine thirty and was obliged to awaken a concierge who slept by the outside gate before I could get in to awaken the concierge at the foot of the hotel stairs.

Jerusalem is an early riser. You hear the hoofs of the horses and donkeys and you hear

men yelling at their camels before sunrise. People are up, have been to market to buy the day's provisions and are returning to their homes when you arise for breakfast—which is very European and consists of coffee and a slice of bread. Every one retires early and Jerusalem is about ready for the midday rest—which sometimes lasts from ten o'clock to four o'clock—by the time the average American city is ready to start operations for the day.

One might walk through the city from the Jaffa Gate to the Damascus Gate at any time of day without being able to find a cooling drink of any kind, unless he stopped at an hotel. The population drinks black coffee in the Turkish fashion, and drinks it many times a day. The Europeans residing here, as well as the natives, follow this custom. There are plenty of places where it is possible to find a lunch such as the natives eat, a cucumber, which is devoured peel and all, much as we would eat a banana from which the skin had been taken, perhaps some little pieces of mutton about as big as a marble which have been smoked black by being plunged into red hot charcoal, native bread, which looks like a large pancake and tastes as if the cook had forgotten to put in yeast, and a few similar delicacies; but there is not one place that I have

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found, within the city's walls, where one unaccustomed to this sort of food could procure even a hurry lunch. Visitors are supposed to stay at their hotels at meal time, and the population that floats about the streets does not know what a glass of lemonade tastes like.

There are two or three drug stores, called "chemist's shops," where it is possible to purchase the crudest drugs. I asked for some tooth powder at one of these places and the druggist laughed. He said that he had some several years ago, but was glad when he disposed of his stock. I asked him what he had for mosquito bites and other bites—for Jerusalem has more flies, fleas, ticks and other creatures that bite than almost any city in the world can boast—and he said that he thought alcohol was sometimes rubbed on the skin, but that if I stayed in Jerusalem for a while he thought I'd become so accustomed to "bites" that I wouldn't be looking for "cures." He added that he once knew a man who found some relief from flea bites by rubbing eau de cologne over the afflicted parts, but he admitted that he was not in a position to recommend anything. And this was the principal drug store in one of the most celebrated cities in the world.

But Jerusalem, considered solely as a city

among cities, has been greatly exaggerated. It is not a Western city, therefore it cannot be compared to any city of the West. It is an Oriental city, but there are any number of Oriental cities that overshadow it in every respect, excepting the fact that it is a religious centre to more people than any city in the world. And perhaps it is not unnatural that we, of the present, should speak of Jerusalem in superlative terms. It seems to have been so from the beginning. I was amused one day in a hotel to hear a guide delivering a rather formal lecture to a party of newly arrived pilgrims. He reminded them in rhetorical language that they were about to begin their tour around one of the world's most famous cities—a city of ancient palaces and so on. A biblical student who heard him reminded him of the fact that in the opinion of scholars the Jerusalem of a day when David came to it, the "city," was little more than a fort or stronghold that protected its inhabitants from wandering desert tribes—and that even David did little than fortify it still more.

Solomon built a magnificent temple, a palace, a bridge over a deep ravine, and enough other buildings so that his capital became one of the wonders of the world, and even the Queen of Sheba made a long pilgrimage to visit him in all

his splendour, the Ethiopian monarchs still believing that they can trace the lineage of their kings to that memorable visit. But it is now the opinion of the archæologists that while Solomon's temple was the marvel of its day, it naturally appeared to be more elegant and wonderful to the people who dwelt in Jerusalem and its environs, than it really was, as compared to other temples, some of which, for instance, now lie in ruins along the banks of the Nile. It is the best opinion to-day that the grandeur of Solomon's temple chiefly consisted in its bulk. Doubtless it had fine ornamentation of precious metals, and it is certain that its foundation stones were tremendous blocks that would tax the ingenuity of builders to place to-day, for many of these stones are still in place and may be viewed by the curious, with the Phœnician characters upon them make it certain that they were put in place during Solomon's reign. Perhaps it had pillars of granite from Assuan on the Nile, or even rare marbles brought from foreign countries, for several large columns have recently been unearthed, which indicate from the rubbish in which they were buried, and their location, that they date from Solomon's period.

But excavations of the past few years have



failed to show the slightest indication of anything further than that the Jerusalem of even Solomon's time was an immense stronghold of surpassing magnitude, with a beautiful temple, royal residences, and, quite likely, residences for the vast retinue of royal servants and temple functionaries. It is the opinion of some of the latest students that the population lived outside of the city walls even in Solomon's time, that they continued to be men of the desert and continued to earn their living from the desert, only coming into the city proper to worship, and in times of danger. It is believed that the fortified part of the city was large enough to hold the population, when necessary, but it is not likely that they dwelt within such a small area.

Modern research has led to the opinion that the popular belief in regard to the Jerusalem of Solomon's day has descended from ancient time and merely reflects the opinion of contemporary people who were chiefly dwellers in caves and rude dwellings and tents or what resembled tents. But Jerusalem has been destroyed so many times, and rebuilt upon the old foundations, that almost any statement in regard to the ancient city causes a division of opinion among the scholars. It is generally necessary to go

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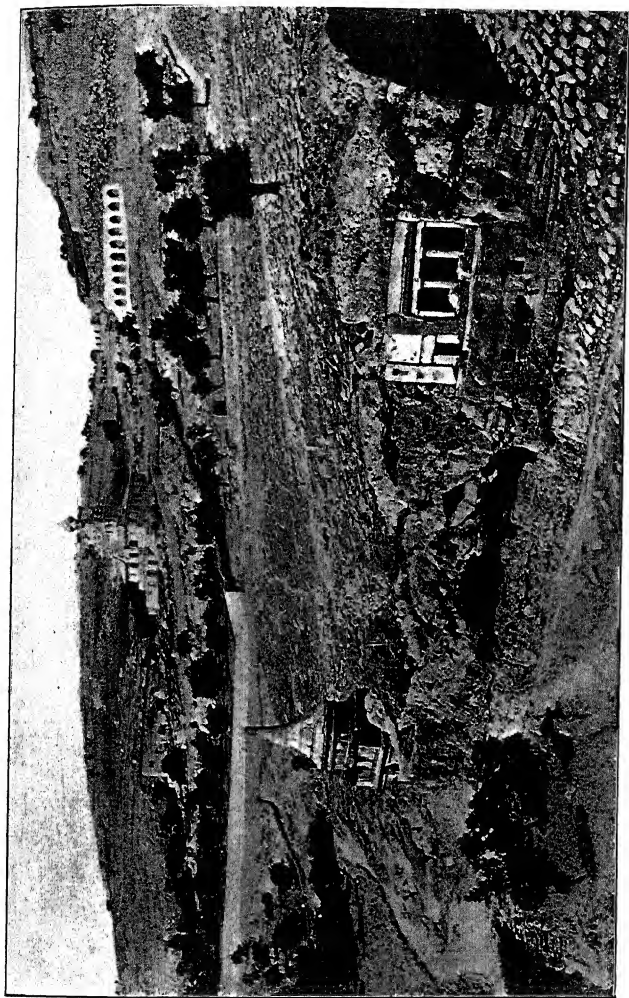
far into the earth to find any stones that were placed in position during the reign of Solomon, excepting at that corner which on the inside is jealously guarded by the Mohammedans, and which becomes the Wailing Place of the Jews on the exterior. Through the courtesy of Sheik Khalil el Danah, of the Mosque of Omar, I was enabled to see the inside as well as the outside of these walls sacred to the followers of Mahomet and kissed by the Jews.

But it takes an archæologist to tell where the reign of Solomon ends and where the work of Herod begins. It is positive that the Temple of Solomon was destroyed, that the Jews built another, but an inferior one, upon the same site, and that following this, Herod constructed a magnificent pile and enlarged the temple area. All of these events took place on a plot of ground that, unlike most of the places in Jerusalem, is absolutely authentic. The dome of the rock, the summit of Mount Moriah, which is now enclosed beneath the dome of the Mosque of Omar, is assuredly the place where Jesus Christ drove the money-changers out of the Temple, and where many other celebrated events in the history of the religions of many people have transpired here during the centuries.

Thus one is impressed by the religious signifi-

cance of Jerusalem. Almost every road and crossing of the ways has seen some event of importance in religious history. But the pilgrims who kneel in the Via Dolorosa and kiss the pavement—and there are tens of thousands of them every year—are certainly pressing their lips to stones that lie from twenty to forty feet above the pavement that was in place at the time of Jesus Christ. Even the extent of the walled city at this period is a question of controversy, and if the Church of the Holy Sepulchre is located on Calvary, and Calvary was beyond the city limits, the city of Jerusalem must have been much smaller within the walled enclosure than it is to-day, and to-day it seems scarcely worthy of the appellation of big city. ✓

It takes but a few hours to stroll around the city walls, beginning at the Jaffa Gate and returning there. This stroll is to be recommended to all strangers in Jerusalem, for they obtain a view of the city, an appreciation of localities like the Mount of Olives, the Garden of Gethsemane, the Golden Gate, the Brook Kedron, and the Valley of Jehoshaphat, which is highly valuable to the future sightseer around the city, and a stroll of this sort suggests to the traveller any number of little side excursions which he will want to make alone. This is perhaps the



VALLEY OF JEHOSHAPHAT.



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city of all in the world where one should prowl about alone, hesitate where he will, and come back when he gets ready, without any definite programme. But it is a difficult thing to make a quick circuit of the city walls, because there are so many places that seem to hold out an alluring hand to the pilgrim or traveller. It is difficult to pass those gnarled trunks of olive trees in the Garden of Gethsemane, which the scientists agree may have been standing at the time of Christ—it is difficult to pass hurriedly those places where Christ used to stand and look over the valley at the city and weep for it.

But the rapid survey has its advantages. I went around the walls and made but two stops. The itinerary was suggested to me by one who knows the city and its history well, so I feel a confidence in suggesting it to other travellers. There is up by the Greek hospice a German woman who shows to visitors two large models of the ancient city. It is a labour of love with her, for her father spent his life making the models. He built them exactly to scale, 200 to 1, according to the biblical accounts, and they convey to the traveller a better impression of the Jerusalem of Solomon's and Herod's time than he could obtain from reading.

Another spot that should be visited by the

stranger before he undertakes much of a study of Jerusalem is the monastery of the White Friars, where the prior has formed a museum of objects mentioned in the Bible. For example, illustrating the crucifixion, there are several illustrations showing antique executions of the kind, antique nails, a sponge similar to that which was raised to the lips of Jesus, thorns similar to those of which the crown was made and the "pieces of silver" and "raiment" mentioned in the biblical account. The flowers, fruits, shrubs, trees of the Bible are shown in a fine collection, as well as all sorts of domestic and agricultural implements that were in use at the time of or before Christ. One goes out from this collection with a certain definite knowledge, for he has seen genuine articles. And this, with the plans of Jerusalem, makes him feel that he is competent to do a little looking about on his own initiative.

✓ Controversy always arises when mention is made of the authenticity of the site upon which the tomb of the holy sepulchre is placed. But little is to be gained from argument, and perhaps one of the most surprising facts to the stranger is that the Saviour's tomb is in the hands of the Mohammedans, in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, and that it is guarded day

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and night by Turkish soldiers, who smoke, laugh, play cards and while away the time as they desire to do, at the entrance; and that the Christians of the earth are admitted to this religious centre of Christendom by the kindly offices of a Mohammedan gentleman in whose family the position is hereditary. When repairs are made to any part of the church it is the Mohammedan who must give permission, and there is so much red tape about it that a gentleman in a position to know told me that it cost over forty dollars not long ago to put three cents worth of cement under a tile in the floor that had become loosened.

It is a condition that is a reproach to Christians; but it is also a fact that the various sects of the Christian church have behaved themselves so unseemly in this church that the government naturally protests that the present condition is necessary for the preservation of peace. Formerly an admission price of one franc was charged, but that has been abolished now, and every one may come and go as he pleases. The time and order of services of the various sects, their little niches in the church and other matters that aroused animosity have been arranged satisfactorily, and now it is about the only sacred shrine in Palestine where all sects and all



people may come freely and worship according to their own lights, in their own language and according to their own rituals, a specified time for each having been agreed upon.

The church is reached through a series of filthy and slippery narrow streets, where the stench is sometimes nauseating, although the old residents declare that the streets have been kept cleaner since the "visit of the German Emperor." There was a general house-cleaning in Jerusalem before he came here, and not enough time has elapsed since then to permit the streets to become impassable. But garbage, refuse from all sorts of shops and restaurants is freely thrown into the highway. There are swarms of flies upon everything. One sees more abject poverty here in the crouching figures that lie along the route than he had believed existed in the world. Hawkers of religious souvenirs, candles and rosaries attempt to impede one's progress along the route, and after arriving at the small courtyard of the church itself, which is very difficult to find in the maze of streets barely wide enough for three men to pass, one is greeted by yelping voices of merchants who have their wares spread out on rugs and conduct a veritable Coney Island ballyhoo, fighting among themselves and with their customers,

until it is a relief to arrive within the ancient walls of the sacred shrine.

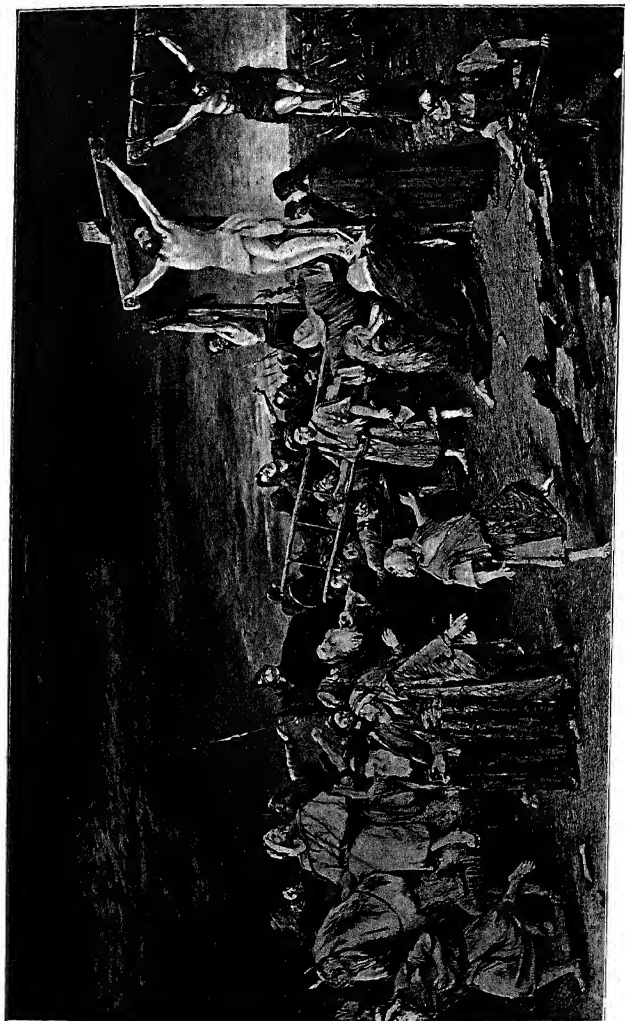
✓ The Church of the Holy Sepulchre lies within the city walls. Plenty of people will not accept this site, and maintain that the city walls in the days of Christ were in about the same position as they are to-day. Thus to them what is known as "Gordon's Calvary" is the more acceptable site, and the Mohammedans, always on the spot, have located a Moslem cemetery there. General Charles Gordon, the hero of Khartoum, was so impressed with the appearance of the "place of a skull" that lies just beyond the city walls, that he wrote several articles after his visit here to prove his claims. Hence his name has become popularly attached to the site, and an English woman has spent considerable money in walling the place in and preserving it in its present form. But it takes a lively imagination to trace a "skull" in the outline of the white cliff, as some believers in it profess to do. I tried it at several times of day in several lights and could trace only the barest likeness.

Still other places are pointed out by other people. Thus I was interested to hear the opinion of Jacob Spofford of the American colony. He has been a lifelong resident of Jerusalem, is a keen biblical student and has had much to do

with the various archæological explorations that have been conducted by various nations. And his conclusions in this matter, as he related them to me, are that neither the Church of the Holy Sepulchre nor Gordon's Calvary is the place where the Saviour was buried.

"I can accept neither site," he said. "The Church of the Holy Sepulchre was located by a woman's dream (referring to the fact that St. Helena marked the spot after having been led to do so by a vision), and the other bears the name of a mystic and dreamer. I saw much of General Gordon when he was here. He was a poetically-minded man, and I don't believe that he attached so much importance to what is termed his discovery. Old encyclopedias of long before General Gordon speak of the hill which now bears his name as being a possible Calvary. But Gordon became a nation's hero at Khartoum, and when that happens it is easy to associate almost anything with one's name, and I feel positive that it was Gordon's fame that gave this place its cause for being considered seriously, rather than anything about the place itself.

"There is a hill beyond the city walls where the Jews formerly dumped the ashes from their sin offerings. I believe that here was another



“ THE CRUCIFIXION. ” — FROM A PAINTING BY  
MUNKÁCSY.



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of those events which might almost be called mystical and unconscious fulfilments of prophecy. There are many of these things connected with sacred history in Palestine. As I investigate and study I am led to believe there are many of them that have not yet come to the attention of scholars. I believe confidently that Jesus Christ was crucified where the Jews deposited ashes from their sin offerings. He was the sin offering for the world, and there was no more appropriate place for the colossal event of His execution. The Roman soldiers who executed Him had no knowledge that they were fulfilling prophecy when they divided His raiment, but they did everything to the letter, just as the Jewish Bible said they would do."

Thus instead of finding argument in favour of either of the better known theories in regard to the site of the crucifixion, I heard much of a "new" theory from the first man of whom I made inquiry and whose opinion I respected. But there are distinguished authorities on all sides. The evangelists tell us that the crucifixion took place on a rocky eminence outside of the city walls. But who knows the location of the city walls of that time? Certainly not the archæologists, who have made the subject a life study, and who should be in a posi-

tion to know if any one does. The Church of the Holy Sepulchre is located in the midst of the modern city, and instead of being on a rocky eminence it is necessary to descend quite a steep hill to reach it. But it is possible that the land has changed in twenty centuries, and also possible that the walls are in vastly different configuration. The Greek, Roman, Armenian and Protestant churches of the world accept the tomb as the authentic site and have done so for centuries—as do the Moslems, but the latter have control of practically all other possible localities.

The Via Dolorosa, the road which the Saviour is believed to have travelled on His way to Golgotha, is a narrow, crooked road leading from military barracks, which are supposed to occupy the site of the house of Pilate, to the Holy Sepulchre. It is marked with tablets along the route and divides the journey of the Saviour into fourteen stations, each indicating some particular event on that sorrowful day. The first is the hall of judgment. The second is where the cross was placed upon Him, and there is to-day an arch which crosses the street where Pilate said: "Take ye him and crucify him." The third is an Armenian hospice for pilgrims, where Christ is said to have sunk under the

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weight of the cross. Near by is the house of the poor man Lazarus and the house of Dives. At the fifth station is where Simon relieved Christ of the cross. Near by is where St. Veronica wiped the perspiration from His brow with a handkerchief, which is preserved at Rome. The seventh station marks where Christ fell a second time. The eighth station is where Christ addressed the women who accompanied Him. The ninth is in front of a Coptic monastery. The remaining five stations are in the Church of the Sepulchre, where Christ was undressed, nailed to the cross, where the cross was erected, where He was taken down from the cross, and lastly the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea, in which He was laid.

✓ Much disappointment is usually expressed by travellers who see the Church of the Holy Sepulchre for the first time. It has been called gaudy, common and unfit, and certainly it is not to be compared to many edifices like the Mosque of Omar in Jerusalem, St. Sophia's in Constantinople and St. Peter's in Rome, but I found it not as various writers had led me to believe. It is not a pretentious building, when viewed from the exterior, because it is barely distinguishable from the cheap and ancient buildings that surround it. On the interior,



however, this impression was quickly changed. It is not particularly gaudy, and one experiences within its walls a certain sanctity of location that is not felt in statelier structures. It was filled with pilgrims the first time that I visited it, and I went back early in the morning to see it when it was less crowded, but even then it was partially filled with sobbing, weeping pilgrims, who crept about on their knees and passionately kissed the stones. They were placing rosaries and other articles on the stone of unction, they were placing their burial garments on the Saviour's tomb and the stone of unction, doubtless the robes that were worn when they plunged into the Jordan, if they have been where Jesus was baptized, or the garments that they will wear on that occasion when it arrives in their course of pilgrimage. And in the midst of it all, choirs of boys were chanting, priests were reading mass, there were processions of priests, monks, nuns and soldiers—it was difficult to permit one's thought to wander from what the eyes could see.

The sepulchre itself is a chapel of yellowish marble divided into two small rooms. It is necessary to bend far down to enter the door, which seems to be about three feet high. The second chapel is only six feet square and is en-

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cased in beautiful marble. Lights from many chandeliers make it bright as day and a monk stands beside the actual resting place of the body of Christ, sprinkling holy water or dropping oil upon the heads of the pilgrims who stop to kiss the marble. There are forty-three lamps here always burning, and while holes have been chiselled in the wall to permit the heat to escape, it is always very warm and one stays but a moment. It is through the holes that the officiating clergymen pass the sacred fire at Easter—which causes so many of the tragedies, because there is a mighty scramble to be the first to receive it. Presumably the fire comes down from Heaven each year, and from this holy spot goes forth to kindle flames on the altars of many sacred edifices.

Within the walls of the church and in its various chapels, many places of surprising interest are pointed out. On the stone of unction Christ's body is said to have been prepared for burial. There is the spot where the Holy Mother stood with Mary Magdalene and St. John. There is the chapel where Jesus appeared to His mother after the resurrection, the chapel of the parting of the raiment, the chapel of the crown of thorns, and the chapel of the cross, which contains three silver discs, marking

the exact locations of the crosses—and it is notable that the pavement is opened at this point, showing a crack two or three inches wide, which bears unmistakable evidence of some mighty convulsion of the earth. Beneath this is the chapel of Adam, for the ancient writers of church history maintained that Adam was buried beneath Christ, and that the latter's blood flowed through a cleft in the rock to Adam's skull. And many other exact locations are pointed out to the visitor. There is, for instance, in the Greek chapel, a stone which marks the centre of the world, and candles are perpetually burning upon it. Everywhere lamps of gold and wrought silver are suspended and throw their beams to the jewelled pictures of saints, some of whom have crowns and robes of diamonds and rubies.

Millions of pilgrims have passed up and down these stairs, so that the stones have become worn to a hollow and are very slippery, and travellers are warned to step carefully and cling to the railings. There is a perspiring pillar, the perspiration of which cures all diseases. Abyssinian monks lurk in little recesses, as do their Greek, Latin and Armenian brethren, each taking his turn in guarding the Holy Sanctuary. Chimes of bells are eternally sounding, organs

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pealing—and the thousands of pilgrims file in and out. They have come from the ends of the earth for these few minutes around the Saviour's tomb.

It is interesting to observe that adjoining one of the chapels, family tombs have recently been found which prove beyond a doubt that this was an ancient burial place, and give strength to the argument that it was the place where Joseph had his new tomb. Inside of the church there is the odour of sanctity, but as quickly as one leaves its walls the cries of the hawkers of souvenirs remind him that he is in one of the foulest districts of the earth's cities.

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## CHAPTER X

### THE MOUNT OF OLIVES

**I**T was Decoration Day morning in America as I started out to visit the Garden of Gethsemane, which had been so plainly visible from my hotel window at Jerusalem. Many evenings, as the sun was setting, or as the electric lighted cross on the Church of the Holy Sepulchre seemed to stand suspended in the night sky, as the bells were chiming and tolling, I had looked over at that hill, one of the saddest in all the geography of Christendom, thinking that when the sun had risen the next day I would pay a visit to the little walled enclosure on the Mount of Olives. But many days passed, each offering a rich reward to the stranger in Jerusalem and I had neglected to make the little journey across the valley to the place of sorrow. I began to wonder if it was because it is human nature to attempt to avoid unpleasant thoughts. The hill is a barren-looking thing when viewed from one of the other hills around Jerusalem. At certain times of the day it has an almost

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chalky whiteness due to the large number of sandstone cliffs and white roadways that circle it from its base to the crest. Even the foliage of the olive-trees, covered with white dust, looks grey or dull blue. It is not at all "association of ideas." The Mount of Olives, like the other hills around Jerusalem, has a forbidding aspect to one accustomed to the green of trees and grass. There are golden domes on churches, splotches of darker colour made by buildings, but even most of the buildings are made of white stone and enclosed by white walls. The sun blazes and scorches upon them, and the Mount of Olives on a summer day does not invite one who has been stung by the "to-morrow will do" beetle of the Orient.

But a visit to the hill itself shows one that the distant view has been somewhat erroneous and misleading, for there is much vegetation. There are fields of waving grain, ripe at this season, and inviting a large number of reapers, and there are large groves of olive trees. But the white sand blows around in choking gusts. I saw but one cool and refreshing spot on the entire hillside, only one spot that retained anything like the appearance of life and spring—and that was within the high walled enclosure, the Garden of Gethsemane, where the Francis-

can monks cultivate little gardens, and maintain formal and narrow walks around the olive-trees, that are so ancient one readily subscribes to the belief they are centuries old, and perhaps they date from the beginning of the Christian era itself.

But as I started out down the hill from the Damascus Gate, where herds of sheep and goats were being offered for sale, just as they have been for centuries, I soon plunged into an atmosphere of agony, which served as a theatrical invocation of gloom. It was a fitting start for a visit to the Garden of Gethsemane. The night before, at eight o'clock, the governor general of Palestine had received a telegram from the authorities at Constantinople—and it is perhaps timely to note that the people of Palestine dread the rule of the Young Turks as much as they ever feared the tyranny of Abdul Hamid—that more soldiers were needed from this district. And a part of the horror of the news was that the men were needed for Arabia, around Medina and Mecca, which soldiers call “certain death,” because the climate and hardships make it practically impossible for them to return at the expiration of their terms of service. They had about thirteen hours to prepare for the inevitable. It was like the word of

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Herod that circulated from house to house, striking terror to the heart of everyone.

It was about nine o'clock when I came through the Gate and started down the hill, suddenly finding myself in a crowd of sobbing men, hysterical and weeping women, and crying children that blocked the road. Most of the men were young, and were being torn away from young wives and little children, and the poor creatures were doing the best they could to prevent them from going. It was not that make-believe sorrow of the wailing women at funerals, which one hears so often in the streets of these cities of the East. Here was genuine grief. As the men listened to the command of gruff officers, who rode around on horseback and shouted at the sorrow-stricken crowd, the women would climb into the wagons that were to transport them to the railroad over beyond the Jordan. The women threw themselves on the ground and hung to the men's legs trying to prevent them from rising to the step. They clung to their hands and kissed them. A crowd of the women threw themselves on the ground and braced themselves against the wheels of the wagons so that they could not turn. Moham-medan women defiantly threw back their veils and openly pressed the faces of their husbands



and sons to their own lips—an act that means more in this country than we in America can imagine. But they were dragged away. The wheels started to turn, and the boys started on their journey to death. The horses were whipped up, but the women endeavoured to follow. Some of them ran like tigresses, bounding over stones and going up and down hill. I saw one group who literally ran cross-lots up the Mount of Olives, vainly hoping to beat the three-horse wagons on the upward journey, that they might have one more glance at their loved ones.

As I walked along I passed many of the women who had fallen exhausted by the wayside and were lying in the gutter, sobbing violently. It is a very serious thing for the Mohammedan woman left by her husband in this manner. He receives pay for his soldiering that just about pays for his own bread. Under a new ruling of the Young Turks the wives receive one dollar and twenty cents a month, not enough to pay for bread and water in a place like Jerusalem. And four cents a day does not provide nourishment for the large families which most of the men leave behind. The veiled woman is forbidden to work outside of her own home. Thus the poor creatures, who were per-

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haps happy the night before, were now to become beggars or starve, unless saved by some kind Providence, which was not visible at the moment of parting from their husbands, for unless relatives or friends immediately took them in, their condition would likely become worse than slaves.

It is a splendid carriage road that leads to the Mount of Olives from Jerusalem. It was, like so many other good roads in Palestine, built for the comfort of the German Emperor, who made a tour of the Holy Land some years ago and left monuments in various parts of the country to chronicle that fact to posterity. Khalil, our dragoman, says he wishes the Emperor would come again, and that all the other emperors and kings would come this way; for that is about the only incentive to good roads, as the present government of Turkey looks at it.

Ascending the hill one soon arrives at the splendid building which bears the name of the German Empress and is a sanitarium. Just beyond this building there were pretty native girls gleaning in the fields—even as did Ruth—and I stopped to watch them. They were pictures, every one of them, as they bound the little bundles of grain and deposited them in a big pile in the centre of the field. But an irate father,

or male relative, did not fancy the idea of my looking too long at the pictures, and shouted something at me which I took to be a command to "move along, please."

Soon I reached the top of the hill, and, as it was a clear morning, I could see far over into Jordan Valley. The river was squirming along in the sunshine, and the Dead Sea looked like a small mirror off there twenty miles in the distance. I went along a little further and came to the road that leads across the hilltop from Bethany, the home of Mary and Martha, and without a doubt the same road that was so often trodden by Jesus Christ. It must have been at this exact spot, for here the great city comes to view of the traveller from Bethany, that He looked over at Jerusalem and pronounced pathetic words upon its head.

Here, again, I soon realized that I must press along toward one destination, or lose myself in the maze of interesting and sacred places. I said to myself that I would come again to the Mount of Olives. This time, I wanted to see only the Garden of Gethsemane, so I knocked at the wooden gate set in the high wall and a jolly old Franciscan monk came to answer my summons. His was the first smiling face that I had seen that morning on the sorrowful jour-





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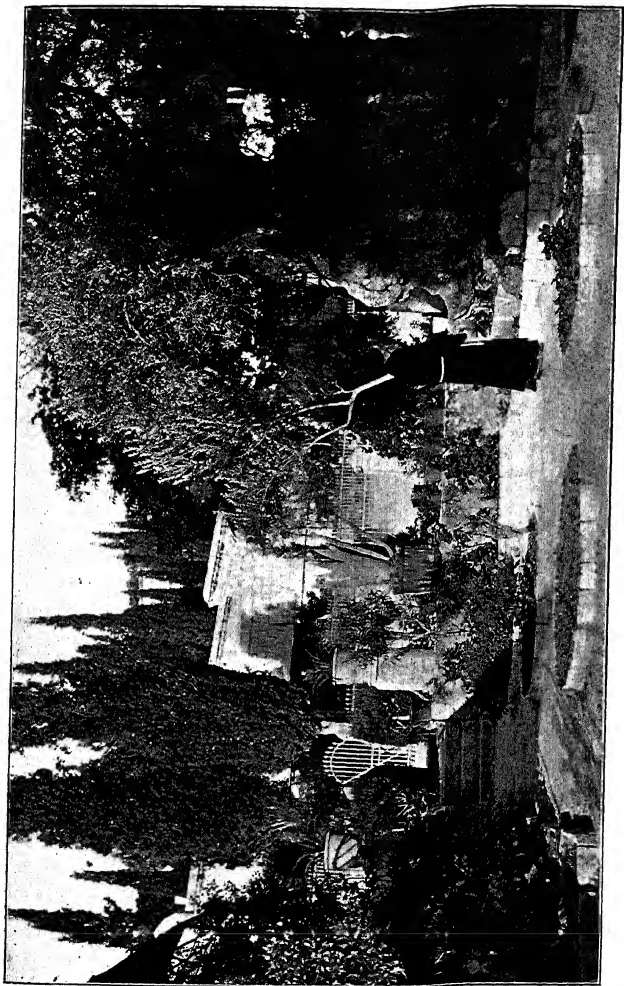
ney from the city. Quickly he invited me to enter and escorted me to a cool little stone building, where he placed a glass of wine before me and suggested that I rest a little while after my rather arduous climb in the sunlight, before undertaking a trip around the garden.

This was a quaint little retreat. Nobody sleeps in the Garden of Gethsemane, but at sunrise the Franciscan leaves his monastery and comes here to keep watch until long after the sun has set. He has been there for many years, and during that time he has been host to many of the world's celebrated personages, just as his brothers were before him. Emperors, kings and queens have called upon him, and were doubtless impressed by his smiling face and cheering voice. They have sent to him autographed photographs which literally cover the walls of the single room. Thousands of guests, from all points of the compass, have left their cards which hang in racks, and the monk suggests that you place your card along with the rest. He speaks enough of the languages of the world to be able to converse a little with every one. It is a warm day. He trusts that you are enjoying your visit to Jerusalem. A beautiful view of Jerusalem is obtained from the garden. Yes, he believes that these are the olive trees

that were here when Jesus Christ walked in the garden. And so on. Then he suggests that his visitors accompany him in a stroll around the garden.

Many people have raised objection to the "desecration" of this place. There are pretty flower beds. They are carefully tended and watered by the monk, who pinches a few leaves from the olive trees and picks a few pansies or forget-me-nots as he passes and hands them to visitors as a souvenir. But after one has seen the filth and decay of many of the sacred places around Palestine he should raise no objection to the care administered upon this little plot of earth. There are seats around the olive-trees, some of which have trunks two or three yards in circumference. One is invited to sit in their shade—while the monk silently passes along and leaves his guests to their own thoughts. He knows that people who come to the Garden of Gethsemane at all, desire to be alone. And he respects their wishes—all of his guests are left to think as they will, and to remain as long as they please.

After a while other guests knocked at the gate. The monk met them with smiling face, just as he had greeted me. After a few words with them in his little retreat, he invited them



GARDEN OF GETHESEMANE, SHOWING A MONK STANDING BY THE TREE OF AGONY.





into the garden. We asked him to pose for a photograph beneath the "tree of agony," the largest of the group. At first he modestly declined and said that it could not be done, but when we pressed him for the favour he lifted his sandals through the flowers and took his place in a big natural seat formed by the gnarled trunk of the tree. And he was still smiling as the camera snapped. We asked him to accept a couple of francs.

"For the poor," he replied, hesitatingly, "only as an offering for the poor."

And after he had placed the coins in a collection box that hangs near the gate, he went again to his retreat and brought out little souvenirs of the garden which he had made. Each of them had upon it a facsimile reproduction of Hoffman's "Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane," an olive leaf, which he had picked from the trees and pressed, and a note to the effect that eight of the trees are supposed to have sheltered the Saviour during His sojourn upon earth. And he read from one of them as he passed them around:

"Over seven centuries have elapsed since the valiant sons of St. Francis were appointed guard of honour at the tomb of Our Lord and at other sanctuaries here in Palestine. Having entered into the heritage of the Crusaders after the

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fall of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem, they have since held their position intrepidly as true soldiers of Christ."

And as he escorted us to the little gateway and closed the door as we went out, he bade us adieu, hoped that we might come again, and gave us his benediction. And his face was still smiling. His was a labour of love.

A few days in Jerusalem convinced me that hymn-writers of the world have never been to Palestine. One who has slipped and picked his way around the smelly alleys of the Holy City, viewed the squalor and poverty of its people, seen how they exist—I have actually seen men sitting in front of piles of the entrails of animals and selling them to customers—can never again sing anything about "Jerusalem, the Golden." About the only thing "golden" about Jerusalem, visible to the naked eye, is the dome on the Greek Church on the Mount of Olives beyond the city walls. The majority of the rest is sheer, rank poverty such as the Western world does not know. And taking my "good-bye walk" around Jerusalem, I recalled another famous hymn, which I could never think of again without a smile:

"By cool Siloam's shady rill,  
How sweet the lily grows."

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Siloam's environs are anything but attractive to-day. One is reminded of the definition of the lobster, "a red fish that crawls backwards," which is correct, excepting that the lobster is not a fish, it is not red and it does not crawl backwards. Siloam is not cool, it is not shady, and no lily would be found in such a place. It is a filthy hole in the ground where there is a stream of greenish water, which is still used by the families in the neighbourhood. I visited it and found several old women washing clothes on the stones—some of which were beautifully carved granite pillars and pieces of marble—and watched the procession of girls with Standard Oil cans on their heads as they came down the steps, filled their cans, not with the cleaner water where it drips forth from the rock, but in the dirty water where others had stood in their bare feet mauling the week's laundry. The girls were ugly in appearance, several of them veiled, and they had not even the attractive appearance of Oriental women with ornamental jars on their heads.

Even here, one was obliged to step carefully. Even the stone steps that lead to it are filthy with mud and refuse. Such a place would readily be condemned as a public nuisance in America but here the water is consumed by many

families, and, curiously enough, is said to be healthful, if one can drink it. Some of these pools are popularly supposed to date back to the time of Solomon, but archæologists claim that they are not older than the Roman period. And the water supply of that day is not sufficient for the population of to-day. Tourist agencies continue to do all in their power to entice people to the Holy City, apparently unmindful of the fact that about as many come already as can find anything like comfortable accommodations in the hotels.

“It isn’t hotels we need,” said a prominent resident of Jerusalem to me, “so much as water. The hotels would come if we had anything like enough water. We use all we can get to-day with our resident population and pilgrims who reside at hospices.”

In this connection one is reminded of the fact that an English philanthropist who knew of this condition, once offered to provide an adequate water supply for Jerusalem and said that she would contribute \$250,000 for that purpose. The Turkish authorities, so accustomed to blackmail and ridiculous demands in all public matters, failed to realize the irony of the thing and actually sent agents to demand “bak-sheesh” from her before allowing her to make

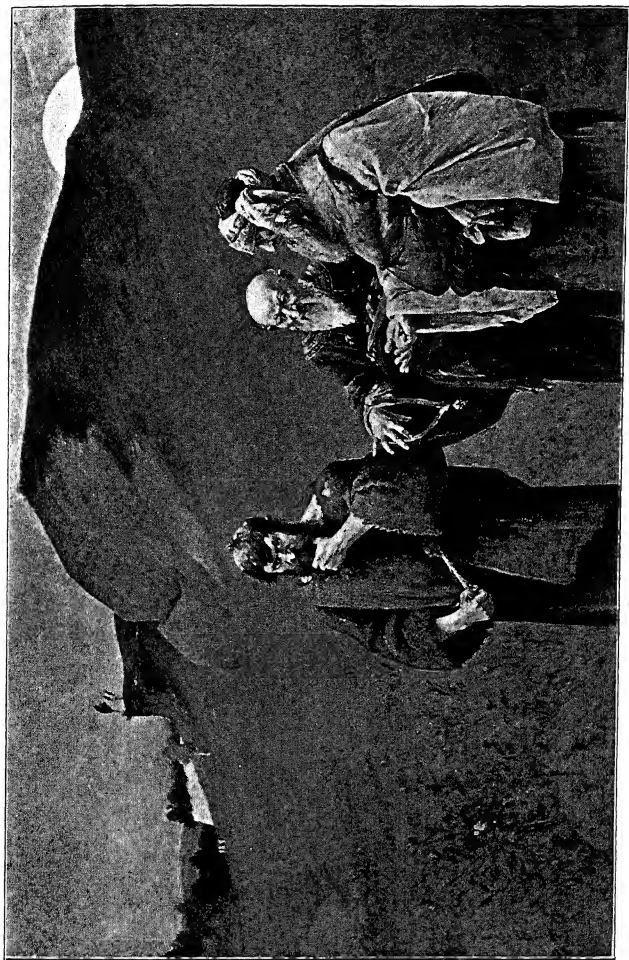
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the improvement, whereupon she became disgusted and withdrew her offer.

It is interesting to wander around the old city in the neighbourhood of Siloam's Pool, however, for every inch of ground fairly creaks with history. Near by is a tomb with Egyptian inscriptions supposed to be the burial place of one of Solomon's wives, a daughter of Pharaoh. But one tomb, more or less, does not count for much in the Valley of Jehoshaphat. It is believed that literally millions of Jews have been buried here, as they are being buried here to-day. It is the holiest desire of many pious Jews to be laid here for their eternal rest and it has been so for centuries. Many bodies are shipped here from all parts of the world, in response to the last expressed wishes of the deceased. Tombs and headstones of one generation crumble and decay and those of the next generation take their places. The guide tells us that a funeral service is in progress here at almost all hours of every day, many of them over bodies that are shipped to Jerusalem with instructions for burial in what is considered the sacred valley, for it is said that Gabriel's horn will be heard here on the Day of Resurrection before it is heard by people in graves elsewhere on earth.

Up beside the Garden of Gethsemane the guides point to the "exact spot" where Judas betrayed the Saviour. It is a stone worn hollow by the kisses of pilgrims. Near it is the rock on which the disciples were sleeping, when reproved by Jesus, because they could not watch one hour with Him. Some of these places tax the credulity of travellers but they appeal to devout pilgrims; thus one sees the Russian peasants kissing the ground where the Holy Mother mounted her donkey for the flight into Egypt, where Jesus met His mother when He was on His way to the Crucifixion, the spot where Judas hanged himself and the place where the Holy Mother died, although a council of the Church long ago decided that she died at Ephesus.

It is plainly enough stated in the Bible that Jesus led His disciples "as far as Bethany" at the time of His ascension, but the Chapel of the Ascension is located on the Jerusalem side of the Mount of Olives. The site is marked by a little chapel, a crude little affair without ornament, which belongs to the Mohammedans, who allow the various Christian denominations to come there and hold services. It is a little white-washed structure with bare walls, in the centre of it being the top of the rock from which



“JUDAS ISCARIOT BRIBED BY THE PHARISEES,” — FROM A PAINTING BY HERMANN PRELL.





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the Saviour is believed to have ascended. It is strange to the Christian who visits this place that the magnificent Mosque of Omar covers the rock which is supposed to have been the scene of a similar event in Mohammedan history; while here the place of the important happening, upon which the Christian bases his hope of eternal life, should be but a dingy chapel with a rock protruding through the floor, a rock worn smooth by the kisses of pilgrims, and covered with grease from many candles.

Walking along this slope of the Mount of Olives one comes upon three or four conspicuous tombs. One is said to be that of St. James, the apostle, one the tomb of Zachariah, and another the tomb of Absalom. They may be authentic, they certainly are very old, but there is no proof. Out of all of them, however, the peculiarly cut shaft of stone named for Absalom is most likely the one to which the Bible refers when it says that during his lifetime he reared for himself in the king's dale, a pillar, because he had no son to keep his name in remembrance. It is certain that the pillar has borne Absalom's name since the year 333, and at that time it was already old, so it is probably the genuine article. It has a large circular base and tapers to a point near the top.

A French princess erected a beautiful chapel and cloister on the Mount of Olives at the place where it is believed Jesus taught His disciples the Lord's Prayer. This was built upon an old Crusaders' chapel which was destroyed by the Moslems, and fragments of the earlier structure are plainly visible in the courtyard or garden, where purple lobelias were in profusion the morning of my visit. Parts of the garden have splotches a yard square of Roman mosaic, which proves that the place was noted in antiquity and is perhaps the place that it is claimed. There is a large statue of the princess in the courtyard and it was her request that she be buried within the walls, but it is said that her remains were never brought here, although there is a stone vase containing her father's heart.

Around the courtyard, on marble tablets, the Lord's Prayer is engraved in practically all the languages of Christendom, including some of the unfamiliar Eastern dialects. The princess is said to have endowed the institution liberally, but the funds were misspent in some manner, so that the Carmelite sisters, who have taken the vow of eternal silence and never see human beings again after they have entered its cloisters, are in need of funds. Our dragoman

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says that he once saw a ceremony of entrance to this cloister. The nun who was received was dressed for burial, the candles were lighted about her bier, showing that she had said good-bye to the world, the gates were closed and she was received into the cloister, never again to see a human face, for even when a priest or doctor is called at the deathbed of these sisters a heavy curtain separates them from the visitors and when mass is celebrated in the chapel they enter darkened chambers where they can hear but cannot see the officiating clergyman.

Following the Mount of Olives road that leads past the Damascus Gate, one comes upon the New Jerusalem which is being rapidly built up at the present time and which presents a lively contrast to the older city. Several wealthy Jews in Europe and America are providing model stone tenements for Jewish people on the hillside where there is cleanliness and fresh air, and a symptom of how welcome the opportunity to move out of the filth of the city comes to them is found in the fact that every room is occupied as quickly as completed. The rental is low, therefore a vast colony will doubtless spring up in this neighbourhood in the near future.

One fails to feel much sympathy for the Jews of Jerusalem, however, as they seem to be either hereditary beggars, particularly the Spanish and Portuguese Jews one meets in the streets, or men who have lost ambition and depend for their living upon the charity of Jews in Europe and America. Theirs is a far different condition from that of the men in the Jewish colonies, who thankfully receive some help at the start, but instead of sitting still and trusting to a further bounty from their co-religionists seem to pride themselves on their own accomplishments and the excellent use they have made of the talent entrusted to their keeping. Thus the fact that they belong to the same race and religion is about all that they have in common with those industrious and prosperous citizens of Zion. The typical Jew of Jerusalem is a morose gentleman who spends his time in contemplation of the fact that he is "despised" by other religionists or praying for the return of a kingdom of power while other men provide his food and a roof to shelter him.

Jerusalem seems to be the rendezvous for all the weird thinkers in the world. They have a religious "hobby" and they come to the Holy City where they are quite likely to find followers and believers. There is a man who carries



NATIVES OF JERUSALEM.



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a heavy cross on his shoulders around the streets, doing penance for some terrible sin. There is another who slaughters a lamb every morning and gives the meat to the poor. There are dozens of young men who attempt to look as Jesus Christ has been pictured by the artists. You meet them prowling about the streets, absorbed in deep thought and meditation. Some of them are insane, and, like the Mohammedan "holy men" met with at every turn, would be sent to asylums for treatment if they were in Western countries, but in Palestine they are either despised by their enemies, who are not of the same faith, or highly venerated by the crowd. The people of the "American colony" seem to have reached the happy medium in combining some rather strange religious beliefs with thrift and commercialism; thus they are able to live well and have been highly beneficial, by example, at least, to their Syrian neighbours and servants, many of whom they have taught to cook and live as civilized people should live in the twentieth century.

The American colony seems to be something of a misnomer, for most of the membership of about one hundred seems to consist of Swedes and Norwegians. But the colony was founded by Mrs. Spofford of Chicago, who seems to have



had some original ideals about "community of interests" and "living as Christ would live if He were on earth to-day." Members when entering the colony contribute whatever they possess to the common fund and devote all energies thereafter to the colony's affairs. There are many young men and women who come from all parts of the world, give whatever money they possess and then contribute the labour of their hands. One works in the kitchen, which is said to be just as "dignified" as working at a desk in the office. Others work in the carpenter shop or photograph gallery and others in the gardens. The colony has several thriving establishments including a large store, art gallery and places for weaving. They have several fine homes, large stone structures set among beautiful gardens. I had tea with them and found them a "happy family." There were many children and there were men with long white beards. The girls and boys gather Palestine wild flowers "mentioned in the Bible," which they paste in little books bound in slabs of olive wood and these are shipped around the world as souvenirs. Thus each and every member of the colony seems to be contributing some labour for the common good. The colony's example seems to be entirely beneficial.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE DEPARTED KINGDOM

**I**T was Friday afternoon, so I went to the Wailing Place of the Jews in Jerusalem, and, although I have never found any one who was similarly impressed, the entertainment afforded caused me to think that many excellent emotional actresses are being deprived of their opportunity to "shine" on the theatrical stage. One has sympathy or should have, with the religious emotions of any people. What seems weird and strange to the traveller, as, for instance, the show of the whirling and howling dervishes, or the festival of Husein, when the Persians walk through the streets and slash themselves with razors and knives, should at least be "respected." It is all religious practice, and if Occidental travellers had been more thoughtful of their actions when they beheld these things there would be less evidence of fanaticism in Eastern countries to-day, less hatred of the Westerner.

But, so far as I was able to learn, the wailing

of the Jews at the stone wall, some of the blocks of which were put into position at the time of Solomon, is not a religious practice and is not generally countenanced by the Jews of the world. The people who go there are weeping for the lost kingdom. They pray that it will come again. There are big dents in the greasy stones where candles are burned and where the crowd kisses the masonry. And there is not the slightest sign of sincerity in the formality. Girls and women, who did not observe us when they arrived, immediately burst into tears and began to kiss the stones and fondle them tenderly with their hands. One of them turned and saw us, remarked to the others that we were taking pictures, and all of them immediately ceased to weep, blew their noses and turned around in what they considered an artistic pose for their photographs. Old white-bearded men, who stood violently weeping for the lost kingdom and reading prayers for its return, suddenly stopped reading and watched the manipulation of the camera man. Others writhed and groaned and tried to work up emotion, but were unable to shed a tear and went away as if they were disgusted with themselves.

I watched them for perhaps an hour, and with the exception of a sentimental old lady who

came and placed a pillow against the wall and sat in the shade as she read, and a couple of Bokhara peasants, I did not see in one person anything that could be construed to be real grief or sincerity. They came in dozens, but they seemed to do it as a formality. It had been done for hundreds of years, and it seemed that most of those who came felt that they had a certain obligation in keeping up the practice. The Wailing Place is at what is known as the Gate of the Prophets. It is a public thoroughfare and is reached through several narrow streets in the Jewish quarter. There is a Mohammedan whose business it is to see that the Jews who come here to wail are not molested between the hours of four o'clock and sundown on Friday. I talked with him and he appeared to take his position most seriously. He graciously offered me a chair in the shade, where I could view the operation at length; and when I thanked the young official for the kindness, and told him I appreciated his attention on such a "busy day," he reminded me that he would like a little present from me amounting to about ten cents in American money. His pay was very small, he said, and he had a large family to support.

But to this Wailing Place many interesting

traditions attach themselves. All Jews were expelled from Jerusalem during the reign of Hadrian, and were not allowed to enter the city again until two hundred years later. Constantine then allowed them to enter the city once a year, on the anniversary of the destruction of the city by Titus, for the purpose of weeping over the ruins of the temple. For this privilege they were forced to pay heavy blackmail to the Roman governors—a habit that seems to have endured until the present time with the Turkish officials. The payments became larger, so the wailing became more frequent, and in course of time the practice was indulged in weekly. There is a prescribed ritual which is read. It includes some of the Lamentations of Jeremiah and other portions of the Old Testament. Some of the lines are:

“For the palace that lies desolate we sit in solitude and mourn. Haste, oh haste, Redeemer of Zion, and comfort the hearts of Jerusalem.”

The narrow streets of the Jewish quarters are literally thronged with beggars on Friday afternoon. They squat along the pavement, terrible half-insane creatures, filthy, half-naked, covered with sores, crippled, blind and maimed. They fight among themselves for convenient places at the turning of corners, where

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they may pester tourists, and particularly the Jews who come to wail. A more ridiculous sight would be difficult to imagine. First came a patriarchal Jew with long grey beard, gigantic cap of sable and a long flowing robe of lavender coloured satin, which was also trimmed with sable. He lifted his garment as a woman would when jumping a mudhole, so that only his white boots were obliged to touch the filth of the pavement. He came along slowly, and the hundreds of beggars held out their hands and snarled and yelped like dogs. The gentleman stopped, deigned to open his purse, and drew out a handful of little pieces of white paper about the size of a postage stamp. One of these he placed in the hand of every beggar along the route. Then he held his head high and walked along to the Wailing Place, where he kissed the stones and began to recite his prayer. This noble gentleman had been distributing alms and making a spectacular show of himself. Others came along and followed his example. One old patriarch highly ornamented with gorgeous raiment leaned upon the shoulders of his servants, who took the little pieces of paper "money" from a big fancy purse that dangled from his belt and deposited one in each eagerly thrust-forward hand. He, too, passed

along to wail, apparently quite satisfied with himself and consoled that he had been giving funds to the destitute. Verily, they seemed, clothing and all, to be the exact reproductions of a class of individuals whose spectacular prayers were condemned by a great Prophet two thousand years ago.

I asked the Mohammedan who was showing me around to purchase some of this "money" from the beggars. I gave him the equivalent of five cents and he laughingly came back with a handful and gave me back three cents in change. He didn't believe in wasting funds. This "money," as he explained, is only good at the shops in the Jewish quarter. It takes about ten of them to equal an American cent and they are not highly prized even by beggars. Yet the pompous individual in satin had made a ceremony of "distributing alms" on his way to the Wailing Place and seemed to be highly satisfied with the thought of his well doing. Once the beggars became aware of the fact that I had "redeemed" some of the almost worthless paper and that I had given real money in exchange they pleaded with me to take all they had for a few cents. Even to them it was almost valueless.

But rather than the exception, this seemed to

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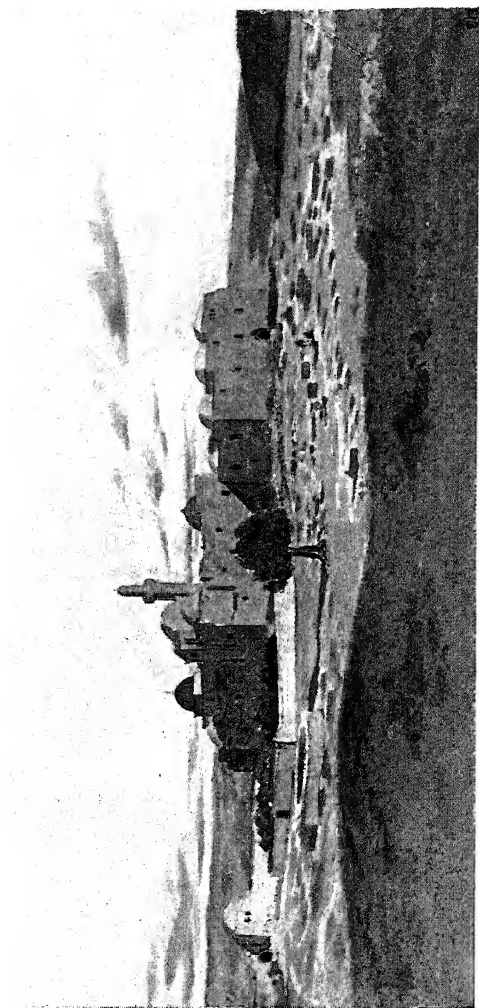
be the ordinary practice as the crowd grew larger. "Alms" were distributed lavishly by most of the wailers. The beggars kept their hands in the air and continued to yell and squeal. If they waited until they got ten pieces of paper, they could trade it to some one for a cent, and they were indefatigable in their pleas for more.

The next day it was quite apparent to me that the beggars of Jerusalem, at least the worst of the lot, have some head or chief who keeps track of the calendar of festivals for them, for I saw them again in line, this time at the Tomb of David; and I afterward saw the same faces at other places around the city where pious pilgrims and travellers were likely to go at a particular time.

Formerly David's Tomb was not shown to foreigners, particularly Christians, because it, like about everything else that has a religious significance, is in the keeping of the Moham-medans; but we had no difficulty in reaching it, in fact our dragoman and the Moslem keeper of the tomb laughed and joked all the time I was inside, so that they disturbed the prayers of the pilgrims who were bending the knee before the sarcophagus, which is a huge roughly carved piece of stone, over which is draped a satin



mantle embroidered with gold and showing many inscriptions from the Koran. There are candles near it, which are always kept burning, and there are fancy tiles set in the walls of the room as in Rachel's Tomb at Bethlehem and many other tombs of the prophets and relatives that I was to see later. It was popularly believed that the Sultan of Turkey was to send the key to this room, in which the Last Supper was held, to the Emperor of Germany when the latter was here; but he came and went and a Moslem still retains the key. All sorts of concessions were to be made in the Holy Land to the Christians as a result of this visit, if one were to have believed the gossip of the time; but aside from a general cleaning up and an improvement of roads there was little change in the condition of things, even if the German Emperor is such a "personal friend" of Turkey. Most of the sacred spots which are not controlled by the Moslems seem to be in the hands of the Greek Catholics. In Palestine little is known of Protestantism. I asked my dragoman to what denomination he belonged and he replied: "I am a Christian." I asked a photographer the same question and he replied: "I am a Christian." As a matter of fact they were Greek Catholics, but they knew





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no distinction from other Christian churches and said that they had never heard of the Protestant denominations I enumerated and seemed to be surprised that they existed. All they knew were Mohammedans, Jews, and Christians.

## CHAPTER XII

### THE MOSQUE OF OMAR

**T**HE visitor from the Western part of the world finds considerable difficulty in becoming accustomed to the curious costumes worn by the men of the East. The women walk around draped in black or brown, and beyond their veils are not noticeable for eccentric costume, but the colours and the fantastic costumes in which the male population of Palestine drapes itself and then saunters forth upon the highway are things that are amusing when viewed at a distance, but somewhat confusing when one is supposed to keep a straight face and not permit his sense of humour to master him.

For instance, I was certain that DeWolf Hopper in comic opera makeup had crept into the Jerusalem hotel during the night and sat in the parlour waiting for me, when a waiter summoned me "because gentleman from the American consulate, he have call upon you." There was D. Hopper with funny whiskers sprouting

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from his face, a gold embroidered red cap with a long red tassel tied to the top of it, great balloon white linen trousers poked into embroidered boots at the knee, and a gorgeous dark blue coat trimmed with gold braid, one that had long spikes in front and behind like the spikes of a star. "Gentleman from American consulate" stood at the end of the long parlour as I approached him, and when he saw me coming he quickly placed his hand upon the yard-and-one-half long sword which dangled from his belt and which rattled like sleighbells as he walked.

My first inclination was to shout: "I recognize you, DeWolf Hopper, you can't fool me even in Jerusalem," but I have learned from experience not to be too sure in a country like Palestine, so I merely bowed.

"I speak Anglis," said my caller, "and I am kavass from American consulate. I come take you Mosque of Omar."

Yes, it was strange, but true. It was necessary to have a soldier accompany a Christian to the mosque. Application had been made to the consulate for a guard during the visit to one of the holiest of all Mohammedan shrines, outside of Medina and Mecca, and here he was before me looking like a comic opera clown. ✓

"I know a gentleman in America who very

much resembles you," I said to the kavass, as we were threading our way along the filthy and narrow streets, similar to those by which one is obliged to approach the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

"Yes? And his name is?"

"Hopper," I replied.

"Hopp-air? Vary strange name, is it not?"

And I wanted to say to the kavass that the name wasn't half so strange as the costume Hopper wears, which had caused the resemblance. But I soon realized that a kavass isn't entirely for show during this visit. The Mohammedans are ugly around this place and do not like to have it profaned by the presence of an infidel. There have been many ugly scenes here. Fanatical pilgrims return here from Mecca vowing to take the life of at least one Christian before they die, because their religion offers a reward if they become "martyrs" in this way. The identical kavass who was now parading before me in his gorgeous uniform was escorting two German women through the mosque when one of them laughed at a Mohammedan in prayer. The man did not hesitate a moment but whipped out a revolver and shot one of them dead. There have been many similar "outrages," as they are known in foreign countries,

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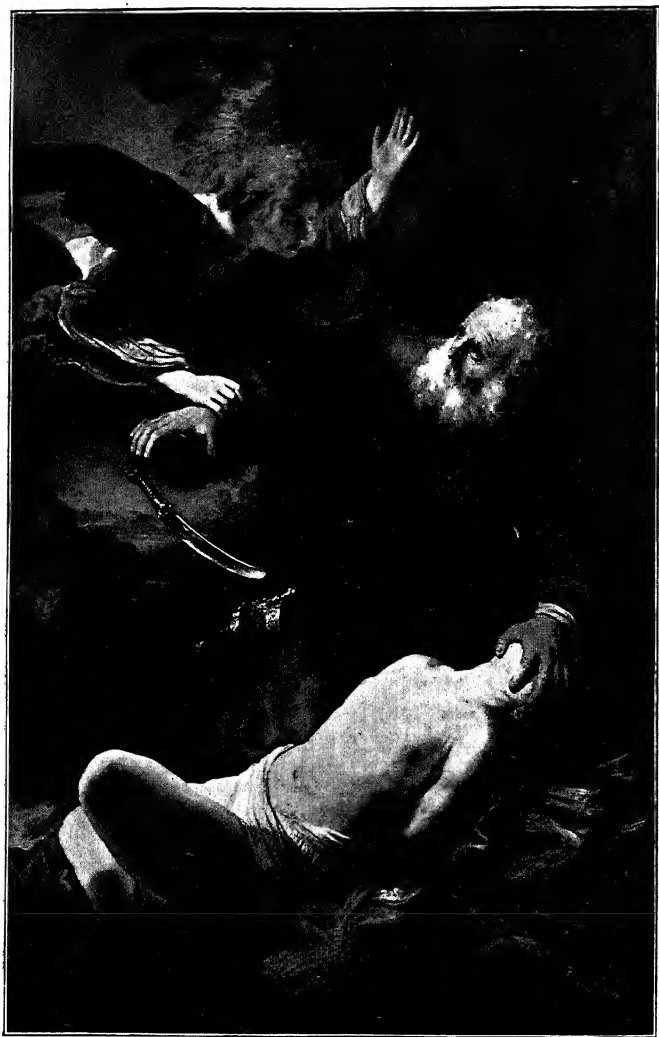
although one can scarcely imagine the reverse condition, a Mohammedan laughing at a Christian at prayer.

Often, for long periods, Christians have been forbidden to enter the sacred enclosure at all, and to this day Jews are of the opinion that the Ark of the Covenant lies buried there, so they will not set foot within the walls. It is a dangerous place if one attempts to see more than the structure itself and penetrate within its mysterious depths. Pious Mohammedans from all over the world consider it a part of the pilgrimage which assures them of Paradise, along with the Tomb of the Prophet at Mecca. They do not want to be interfered with in their devotions by "dogs of Christians," and in many ways this hatred of Christians by Islam is not easy to understand. Sometimes one feels that while the Christians are not entirely responsible for it they have had their contributing influence in forming the great stone barrier that exists between men of the two faiths. The average Mohammedan thinks of the Christian as being mentally inferior to him, and spiritually, barely above the so-called "heathen"; in fact I have heard the Christian referred to by the Arabic equivalent of "heathen." In most things the supposed words of the Prophet are strictly fol-



lowed, as well as many "words" never uttered by the man of Mecca, although tradition has it that he would have delivered certain commands if he had lived, and his followers now respect these commands as of divine inspiration, as, for instance, the injunction to pray five times a day, which is a part of every Mohammedan's religious routine, although the scholars are of the opinion that Mahomet himself never mentioned the exact number of times.

It seems certain that Mahomet first tried to reconcile the religions of Jews and Christians, and that only after his failure to do so he began to claim that he was a prophet, and, finally, the greatest of the prophets. Mahomet taught that Jesus Christ was a prophet of God, although he would not accept Him as the Son of God. He taught that many Jewish prophets were divinely inspired, and in his campaigns into the world, during which his generals attempted to enforce Mohammedan practices, it is certain that Mahomet directed that exception be made of men like Jews and Christians, who had received a divine revelation, and expressly declared, as to his men in Egypt, that unbelievers referred only to men who worshipped graven images. But "unbelievers" are now all who do not incline their heads toward Mecca, Jews and Christians



“ THE SACRIFICE OF ABRAHAM.” — FROM A PAINTING  
BY REMBRANDT.

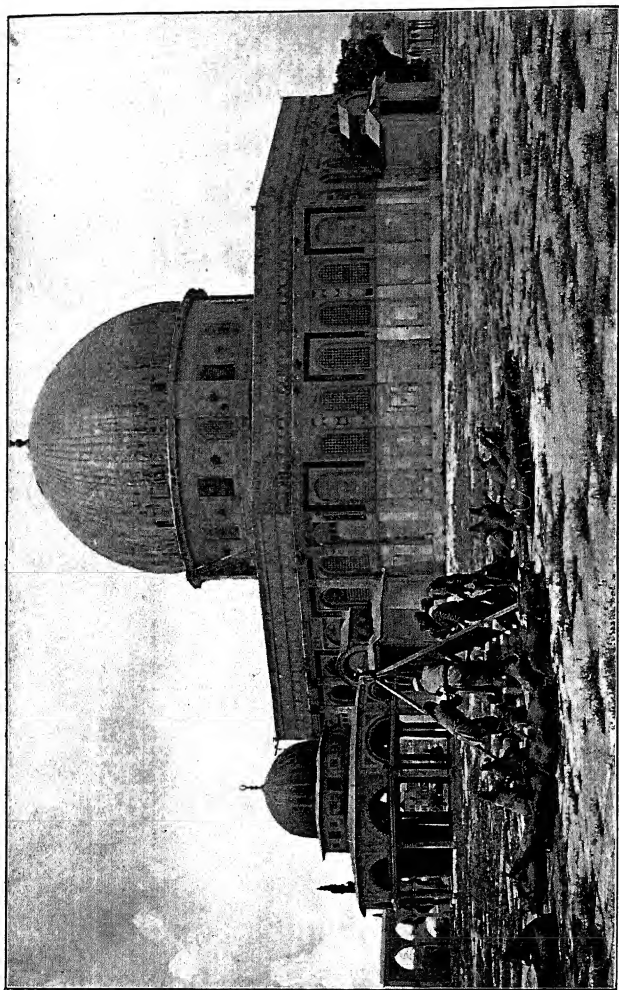


alike. The cross is detested, and the Mohammedan looks forward to that day when the crescent shall be victorious and eradicate the symbol of Calvary from the memory of man.

✓ So much has been written of the Mosque of Omar itself by architectural experts that any attempt to describe its glories by a lay writer is futile. Suffice then, that it is one of the most perfect structures on earth. Many people place it above the Taj Mahal in India or St. Mark's at Venice. And, beyond all this, there is not the slightest doubt that it occupies the exact spot of Solomon's temple, of Herod's temple, and that it was the spot where Jesus Christ drove out the money-changers and that He preached and taught there. It encloses the rock of the summit of Mount Moriah where Abraham was about to sacrifice Isaac. It was the place of prayer of David. And the Mohammedans believe that it was the spot where Mahomet's foot last touched the ground as he ascended to Paradise. In fact, it is the belief that the great stone now hangs suspended in the air, caused by its attempt to follow the Prophet on his flight, and that it would have followed him if it had not been touched by the hand of the Angel Gabriel. The great boulder seems to be suspended in the air, when viewed from one side. On the other side

there is a pillar that holds it in place, but doubtless the true believer thinks of the pillar as being purely ornamental. ✓

Newman wanted to take photographs within the temple area, which was built by Herod the Great, and which by a vast collection of pillars now makes the top of the mountain, which is in reality but a peak, seem like a table-land. Immediately he showed his camera there was a shouting and violent gesticulations. The Mohammedan abominates photographs and cameras anyway, and it is a double outrage to bring them within a sacred enclosure. Soldiers rushed up to us, as did many of the worshippers, and the kavass was asked for the special permit that would enable "dogs" to photograph the mosque. Newman had no such permit. The Ambassador of the United States at Constantinople had "arranged" the matter and had so notified the Jerusalem authorities, but the United States consul was ill and had not been able to attend to all the details of his office in the past few days. A messenger was sent to the consulate, as we wandered around, and soon he came back and held a consultation with the sheik of the mosque; thus it came about that a mere kavass in gorgeous finery was as nothing. We made a tour of the place with Sheik Khalil el



MOSQUE OF OMAR, JERUSALEM.



Danah, a stately old functionary, perhaps eighty years of age, and the Mohammedans who would otherwise have sneered at us and made photographing operations impossible, were now obliged to bend their knees and touch their hands to their sheik. They must at least permit his personal guests to move about in peace.

✓ The grounds around the temple, while paved with large blocks of stone, have many trees and shrubs which have taken root between the paving. There are numerous little kiosks, fountains and praying places, all of which are delicately constructed of beautiful marbles and granites. One is said to have been built specially for Fatima, daughter of the Prophet, who is buried at Damascus. Another is said to have been the judgment seat of David. But while these are worthy of minute examination, amid other surroundings, one is naturally drawn to the mosque itself. It is a huge octagon, each side measuring sixty-seven feet, with a dome one hundred and seventy feet in height.

As we entered we were relieved of walking sticks and umbrellas, and our shoes were covered by large felt sandals, as we quickly found ourselves treading on magnificent Turkish and Persian rugs. The gigantic dome above us looked like a cut jewel, being encased with gold,



magnificent mosaics and lighted by ancient stained-glass windows of indescribable beauty. The entire centre of the mosque is enclosed by twelve beautiful columns, enclosed again by a gilded railing and overhung with a canopy of embroidered silk. Beneath this canopy is "Es Sukhrah," about sixty feet by forty feet in size, the limestone rock of the top of the mountain, which at least for two thousand years has been the altar of God. At the top is a sort of natural basin and into this a hole has been drilled, permitting the blood from ancient sacrifices to flow into the cavern below. This cavern is called "The Well of Souls," and it is one of the sacred places of the earth, for here it is believed that the Almighty will take his seat at the last judgment day. Here also, in a golden casket, are two hairs from the beard of the Prophet. They are paraded around the mosque on festival days by the highest authorities in the Mohammedan Church. ✓

A short distance from this mosque is the Mosque el Aska, which is supposed to have been a Christian church at one time, and which is quite likely upon the site of Solomon's palace. St. John says that "Jesus walked in the temple in Solomon's porch," when the Jews came to Him and demanded: "If thou be the Christ, tell

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us plainly." It is full of tombs and praying places. The sheik walked around slowly and pointed out the various spots to which legend and history have attached so much, but an attempt to describe them would require pages. Over several of the windows was iron network similar to that used as a trellis for vines in Western gardens. The meshes were hung with little scraps of many coloured cloth, it being the custom for pious pilgrims to pull pieces from their garments and hang them on the grilling—little strips about as wide as a "carpet-rag" and perhaps three inches long—the supposition being that this souvenir of their visit to a holy place will avail something when they are in a distant place addressing an appeal to Allah. Much more interesting to us, however, was after we had asked the sheik if he believed that any of the original stones of Solomon's Temple remained in place, and he led us to his private apartments, through which we passed, and by many intricate and winding stairways came at last to the great depth where there are tremendous blocks of stone bearing the characters of the Phœnician workmen who put them in place. This was directly through the wall from the Jews' Wailing Place. "It is authentic," said the sheik; "there is not the slightest doubt about it."

After we had again reached the temple area we walked over to the Golden Gate, the arches of which are plainly seen from the temple area and from the distant Mount of Olives. It was through this gate that Jesus passed on that Palm Sunday when He entered Jerusalem amid the rejoicings of the multitude. But it is now walled up, the popular superstition being that if Christ should come again He would enter the city by the gate through which He came on Palm Sunday, and it is safer to keep the gate perpetually closed, because He might attempt to restore His earthly kingdom with its capital at Jerusalem.

Our gorgeous kavass escorted us back to the hotel, and despite his gold and clanking sword he reminded us just before we reached our own doors that he was a very poor man. Oh, he was very poor, and when people whose lives he had protected at the Mosque of Omar gave him a pretty "baksheesh" he was very thankful! He had a very large family, and something that corresponds to our "cost of living" was so high nowadays that it was very difficult for him to keep up his "state"—whatever that may be. He was a Turk, all right—he wanted a present, some little gift by which to remember the American gentlemen. So Newman tossed him a dollar. He was satisfied, he said, and saluted.

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This seemed to be a very good "present" for a guard in the employ of the American government, who had merely done what he was told to do by his superiors. Several hours later, when I passed through the hotel lobby, there was the kavass.

"I am very poor man," he said, or words to that effect; "I trust that you enjoyed yourself at the Mosque of Omar this morning."

"Very much, indeed," I told him as I passed along.

But DeWolf Kavass was not to be so easily disposed of. When I came back to the hotel he was still there. He was just as poor and his family was just as large as it had been at noon. And he wanted something that would cause him to remember me. He could remember Newman all right, because he had received his dollar. "Some little gift," he said blatantly, using the Turkish word "baksheesh."

"You can remember Mr. Newman, the man who gave you a dollar this morning, you say?"

"Certainment," he replied, to show that he had a command of languages.

"Then try real hard," I suggested, "and recall the man who was with him when he took pictures at the Mosque of Omar." And, as he went away sneering and counting his beads, I felt somehow that I would soon be forgotten.

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE HILLS OF SAMARIA

**W**E started from Jerusalem in a big wagon with three horses to follow the ancient caravan route to Galilee, a road that must often have been travelled by Jesus Christ and His disciples on their various journeys between the two places. Transportation facilities have not improved hereabouts since the Christian era, and there is considerable evidence, from the fact that the Bible contains many references to chariots dashing along in this country and that the Romans were excellent road-builders, that the trail around the mountains and valleys may have been much better in the time of Christ than it is to-day. But there is no railroad, and there is no indication that there will be a railroad for some time to come. Most of the way huge boulders and millions of smaller cobble-stones have fallen into the main path. In the spring, the camels slightly diverged from the regular route into the ditch, the next camels followed and so on for a year, until the roadbed

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becomes a series of bumps and irregularities like the billows of a stormy sea.

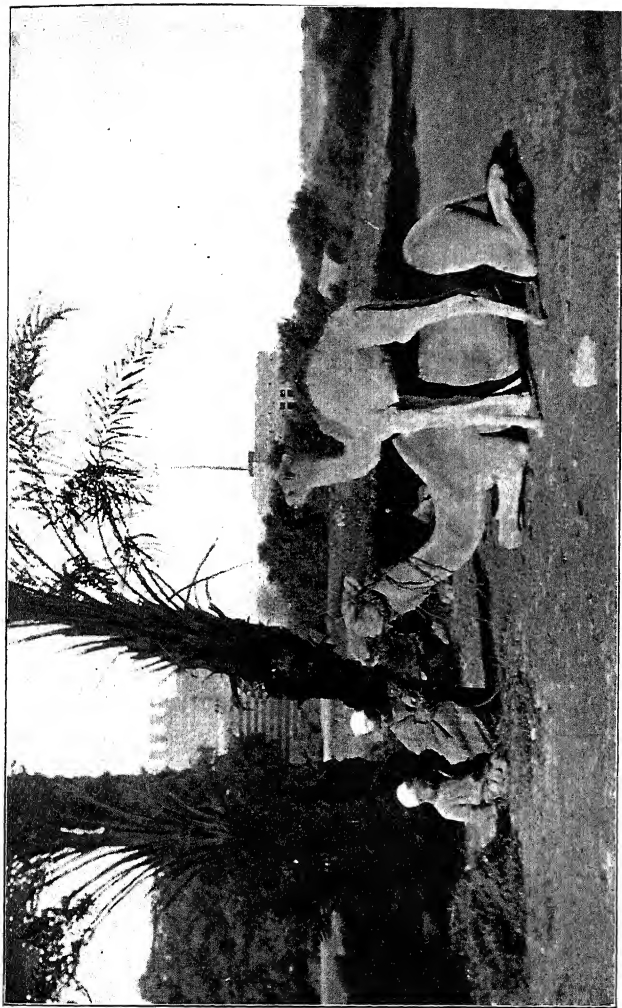
It is likely that Jesus Christ and His disciples rode donkeys and carried their provisions, figs and black bread in saddle-bags, just as most of the people do to-day; and sometimes I was of the opinion that the donkey riders had selected the more comfortable route, for there were plenty of little paths along the roadside where a donkey could pick its way and pass with comparative ease, while our lumbering wagon creaked and tossed and rolled, while the horses were climbing over stones and endeavouring to pull us through without smashing the spokes of the wheels.

And these Palestine drivers are wonderful creatures. They whoop something to the horses as they descend the hill from Jerusalem and the poor things clamour for footroom, gallop, trot, or walk, as the mood seizes them. The driver sits back in his seat, apparently well used to the discomforts that he is experiencing, and seems to care nothing about what happens until the wagon has been hauled up hill, held back going down hill, and smashed along over rocks to the khan where there is a stopping place and feeding place for every one, animals and men.

It was a sunny and beautiful morning as we

started out with the determination of making Nablus before night, the Shechem of the Bible. The guidebooks say that the drive may be made in seven hours, but here again it does seem that guidebooks were written by men who visited the countries described in airships and then wrote an "appreciation" for the guidance of unfortunates who are unable to sail in the clouds. At any rate, we arrived at Nablus before sunset, after a start at dawn, so Mr. Baedeker is correct. One who made the journey in seven hours, however, would not be likely to do much travelling the next day.

And perhaps there is an advantage in travelling such a road in this manner. It gives the dragoman time to talk and explain what one is passing; otherwise it might be only an attractive landscape to him, and one who comes to Palestine merely to see beautiful landscapes is likely to be disappointed. Every hilltop and valley has historical interest, and almost every view discloses something that is held to be sacred to some religion of the world. Thus one listens intently and stares incessantly. There is something of interest passing every moment, and after it is all over, although uncomfortable at the time, one is glad that it was necessary for the horses to pick their way among boulders, for



SCENE NEAR NABLUS.





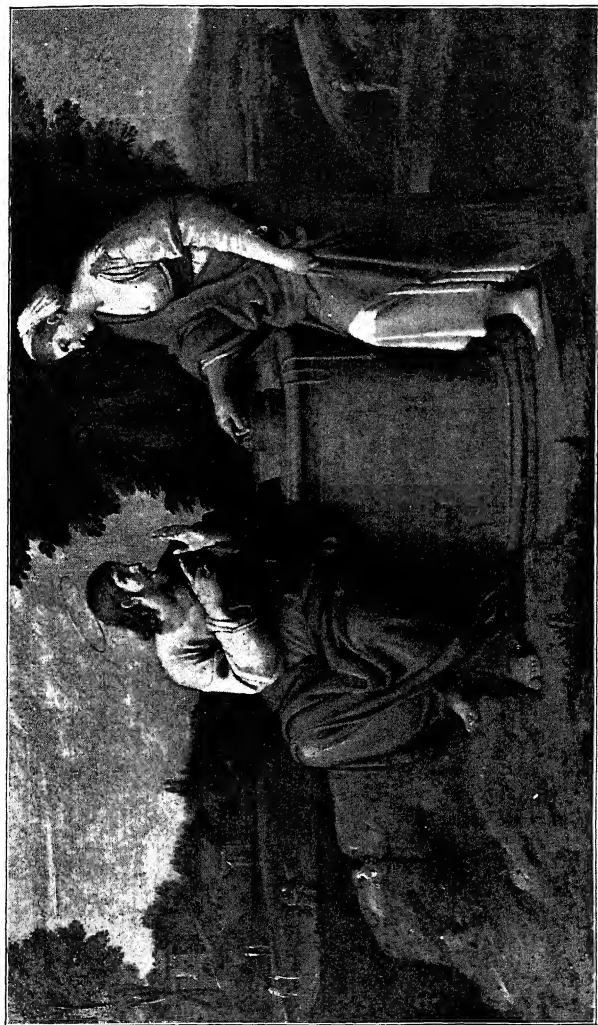
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they allowed better opportunity for an appreciation of the passing view.

We passed through valleys that were literally covered with olive trees with big gnarled trunks that showed their age. Assuredly here was a land that could support its people in comfort, if a paternal government could be made to think of its people. But, toward noon, we came to barren hills again, great white cliffs that seemed to be made of chalk and dry as the dust that came sweeping over them. Then as we reached the top of a hill and spied a donkey path that was a much shorter route to the valley than the wagon road, or what pretends to be one, we decided to "stretch ourselves" and climbed out of the wagon and cut cross-lots, arriving at a khan long before the wagon and luggage. Here many Jewish pilgrims from Tiberias had already "pitched camp" for the noon hour. They were eating onions, crisp little green onions, which led us to make a tour of the environs, where we discovered that the keeper of the resting-place had a large bed of what seemed to be luscious fruit in this white wilderness, and we were more glad than he was to purchase enough of them to make our midday repast seem to be a feast. Fortunately, we had brought bottled water with us, for in this parched land, the drinking water is un-

safe and rare. The peasants who know no other draw their scanty supply from trickling streams in the valleys, and although they drink it in large quantities seem to suffer no ill effects. But it is different with the stranger. More cases of fever and malaria among the pilgrims to the Holy Land are caused by drinking the water in the various sacred wells scattered across the country than from any other source. Orientals are not clean about anything else, so there is no reason to expect them to be about their wells and cisterns. They permit the refuse of the ages to find a lodging-place therein, and do not clean wells until the supply of water is insufficient.

But, before the day was over, we did drink from a well and found its water cooler and better than any we had brought with us from Germany or France. This was Jacob's Well, which has supplied water to thirsty travellers for many centuries. Ever since we halted for lunch we began to pass into a country more and more fertile. There were great fields of grain, larger than we had seen elsewhere in Palestine—great fields that stretched away over hillsides and hill-tops—big olive orchards, fig-trees bordering the way, and, in fact, the people seemed to take on an air of prosperity. They were not the same kind of people whom we had been passing all



“CHRIST AND THE SAMARITAN WOMAN.” — FROM A PAINTING BY CARRACCI.



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day, for they seemed to be happy and well-fed and even the workers in the fields wore gaudy raiment, in great contrast to the rags usually met with.

Soon we came to a white domed tomb, not much different from those that are erected to prominent Mohammedans throughout the East, but here is a little pile of stone that is revered equally by Jew, Moslem and Christian. It is the Tomb of Joseph, and many authorities agree that it is authentic. When Joseph was about to die in his palace on the Nile, he commanded the children of Israel to take his body back to the home of his father, and it is believed that Israel carried him during forty years of wandering in the wilderness and finally deposited the mummy in this place, one of the very few mummies that were ever brought to Palestine.

Near by is Jacob's Well. A Greek church is being constructed over the chapel that covers it, many of the stones and pillars for the new structure being excavated material from an older Crusaders' church that stood on the spot. A monk led us down a flight of steps to the top of the well and then placed candles on a little tray, which by the aid of a windlass he lowered to show us the depths of the well. Afterwards he

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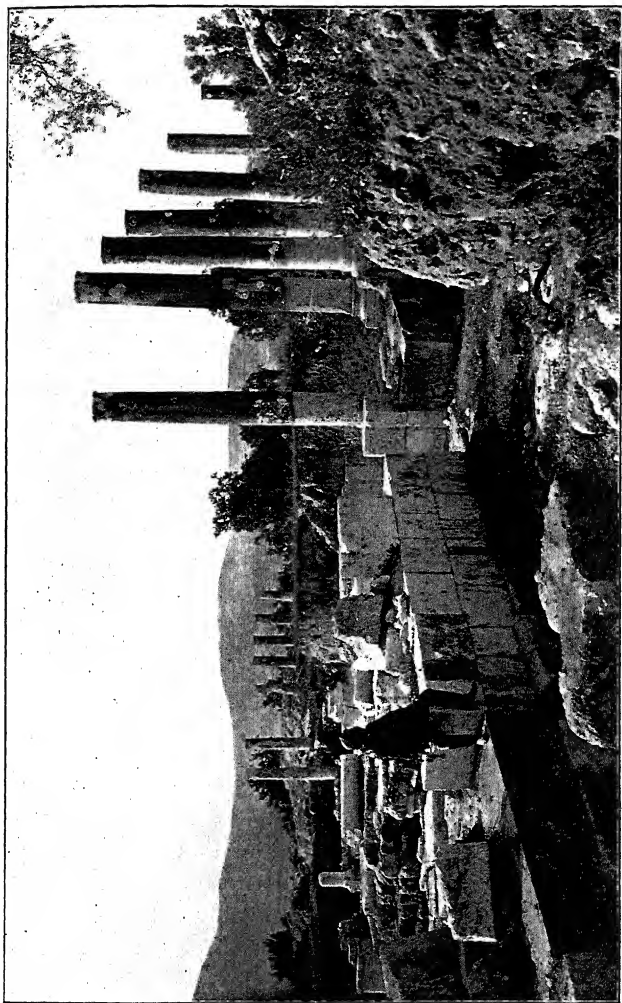
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let us lower a bucket and we brought up cool and fresh water, for the well has been cleared of rubbish and the water is no longer contaminated as it has been during the last century. It was at this well, beyond question, that Jesus met the woman of Samaria and carried on that notable conversation that has fired the imagination of the world. Over there on the hillside we could see her little village whence she came to draw water, as is the daily custom of women at all the fountains and springs in Palestine. And there is reason to believe that the landscape has not changed since that day when she returned to tell of the wonderful things she had heard.

“The Jews have no dealings with Samaritans,” declared the woman whom Jesus met at Jacob’s Well. That was nearly two thousand years ago, but it is as true to-day as when the words came from her mouth. And to-day, in addition to the Jews, the same thing might be said of the Christians and Mohammedans with whom the remnants of a once-proud nation rub elbows in the affairs of their daily life. The Samaritan is a thing despised on the face of the earth by Jew and infidel. The end of all things has almost come for him. There are one hundred and seventy members of the faithful huddled together in little white-domed houses around their





RUINS OF SEBASTEIA.



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only remaining synagogue at Nablus. On the distant hilltop is Sabasteih, the ruins of the beautiful metropolis of Samaria and once a stronghold of Herod the Great. The Samaritan of to-day may look from his roof at sunset and see them, as he can see Mount Gerizim, which he considers the place "chosen of the Lord." All of these places have lost their former glory. They seem to have reached the end before "God's Chosen People." The little group of Samaritans, poverty-stricken, degenerate in appearance and despised by men of all other races and creeds, huddle around the diminutive white synagogue and vow that they will remain faithful to the end.

"The struggle is almost over; God, may He be exalted, only knows how long and we shall be no more; but we shall remain faithful," says Jacob, son of Aaron, High Priest of the tribe, and the greybeards at his side, on the little stone bench on his housetop, repeat the vow: "We shall remain faithful."

In the tone of their voices there is the sorrow of centuries, the decay of pride and the wail of blasted hope. Also there is a faint echo of what must once have been bravery, when Samaritans were men among men, and when they could force their wills. Now they seem to be resigned to the

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fate that awaits them and is rapidly overtaking them.

As I pressed my way through the narrow streets toward their dwellings, dark, narrow passageways scarcely worthy of being called streets at all, dingy alleys into which the light never penetrates because the housetops and balconies meet overhead, I was met at the foot of a narrow stairway by a brother of the High Priest. I was followed by a tribe of hoodlums and Mohammedan children, who threw sticks and stones and spat at me. I was an infidel, I was paying a visit to the despised Samaritans; that was enough to bring down any kind of insults upon my head, and the two guards who accompanied me were kept busy protecting me from missiles which are often dropped upon such as me from overhanging window-ledges.

I pounded on the little wooden door, for I knew that I was expected at an appointed hour, but the keeper of the door hesitated before he opened it, because he feared the fury of the hooting pedestrians. When he finally did turn back the bar the guards hustled me inside and slammed the door closed again. It was a dramatic moment, for it was all unexpected.

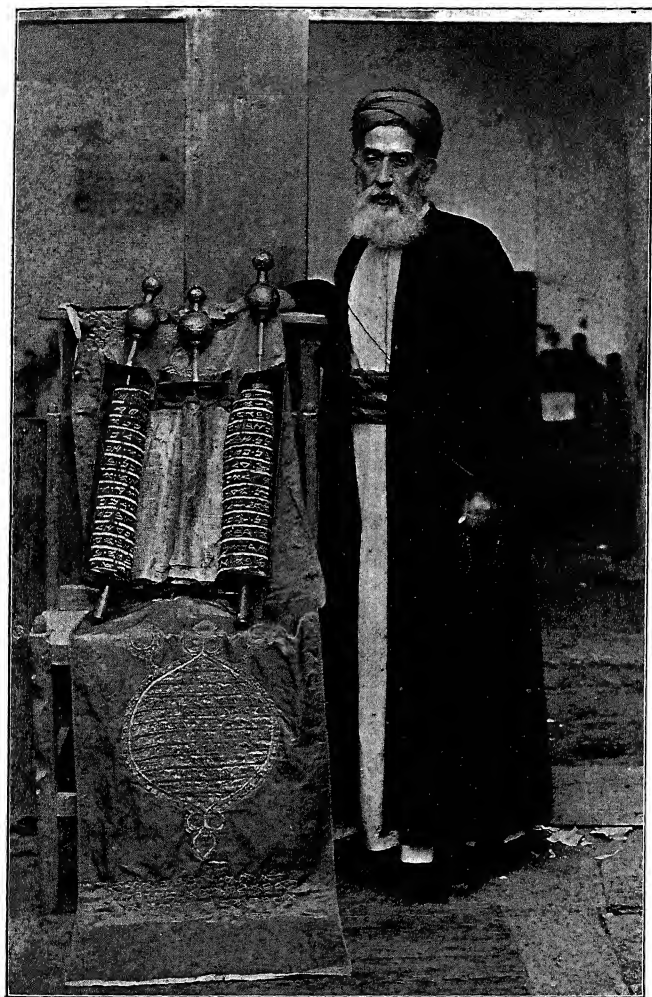
“The Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.” I knew that was true centuries ago, but

what I did not know was that even Mohammedan beggars sneer and hoot at the Samaritan remnant as it exists to-day. Their blood brothers have prospered and spread over the face of the earth, but they, one hundred and seventy of them, about all favourable of them that can be said is that they are interesting to the antiquarian and they "remain faithful." At the top of the narrow stairway which led to an irregular white terrace, which was in reality the roofs of the Samaritan dwellings, an old man met me and extended his hand in greeting. His beard was white, his long flowing gown seemed to be a winding-sheet and a white turban was bound around his head. He had a strong face and a dignified bearing, as did other elders of the tribe whom I saw during my visit, but these features were not characteristic of the younger generation. This was Jacob, son of Aaron, the Hight Priest. At his side was his eldest son, who, in his turn, if the dwindling tribe endures to another generation, will assume his father's wand of office. The son is a weird individual in appearance. The Samaritan "heir apparent" may not cut his hair, so this youth, perhaps twenty years of age, has two long braids of black hair which are worn in a coil at the back of his neck. His skin is dark and his features are

those of an imbecile. Jacob immediately received me and then presented his son, and the latter gibbered and chattered throughout my interview with the High Priest. The others paid no attention to him, apparently well used to his eccentric manner.

“Meester, me spik Anglis,” he said, as he grasped my hand. “High Priest no spik Anglis, and yes I do. I have him study Anglis, meester.”

But it was to Jacob that I wanted to address my questions, and it was his replies that I desired in better English than the son could muster, so we chatted through an interpreter, as my host led the way over the roofs of snowy whiteness, some of which had little arbours of grapevine and flowering plants. We came to his residence, which was different from the others only in that it had a larger arbour where there were several big sofas. Apparently it was a big council-chamber, for as we walked along several men of the tribe joined us, and, arriving at the house, they squatted themselves in Oriental fashion upon the divans, seeming to have their regular places to receive the cup of coffee that was soon forthcoming. Jacob clapped his hands and three women came from the house—probably his wives—one bearing a little clay



JACOB, THE HIGH PRIEST OF THE SAMARITANS.





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stove about a foot high, in which charcoal was burning, another a pair of hand bellows, and the other a tray filled with cups. The woman with the bellows squatted beside the primitive stove and tried to make the fuel blaze. The second busied herself with the blackened coffee-pot, and the other held the tray until the black stuff had been poured into the cups, then she handed the tray to the eldest son of Jacob and after he had knelt before his father while the latter took a cup from the tray, he served the rest of us and continued to chatter: "Me spik Anglis, High Priest he no can spik Anglis."

"We are very, very poor," began Jacob, after we had gone through the formalities of Oriental coffee-sipping. "You see how we live, and because the people are combined against us we have little opportunity to improve our condition, because work for others is forbidden. We have a few fields which we cultivate, but the product of these fields is barely enough to keep breath in our bodies. Perhaps our chief revenue is from tourists who come to our synagogue to see our ancient copy of the Pentateuch. Many of them are eager enough to see it until they learn that we charge an English shilling for showing it, and, although this is our principal source of income, the strangers who come seem to be very

unwilling to contribute. But God's will be done, we shall remain faithful."

"Faithful to what?" I inquired, for the question seemed to be prompted by the constant repetition of the vow.

"To the law of God, who is highly exalted," replied Jacob, and his explanations that followed proved that in his opinion, the Bible—at least that portion of it that is accepted by the Samaritans—must be taken literally, and without any of the "meanings" which modern men have come to look upon as figures of speech.

"Nothing in the Hebrew Bible was inspired after Moses—upon whom be peace," he explained; "we accept nothing later as of Divine origin, but we have the law and we strive to fulfil it."

Then Jacob explained to me many of the ancient laws to which he and his people still subscribe, literal observation of which was discarded by the most orthodox Jews of the world centuries ago, and it became plainer and plainer as we chatted that herein is the principal line that separates Jews from Samaritans and makes the latter despised by Jews and infidels alike. They practise polygamy, but they do not marry blood relatives, and will not do so even though the tribe become extinct. When a man

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dies, the brother marries the widow. While he offered me no evidence that such a law was necessary at this time, the High Priest said that an adulteress is killed, under the law, and that her property is inherited by the high priest who condemns her. When a woman marries outside of the tribe, her property goes to her nearest of kin within the tribe.

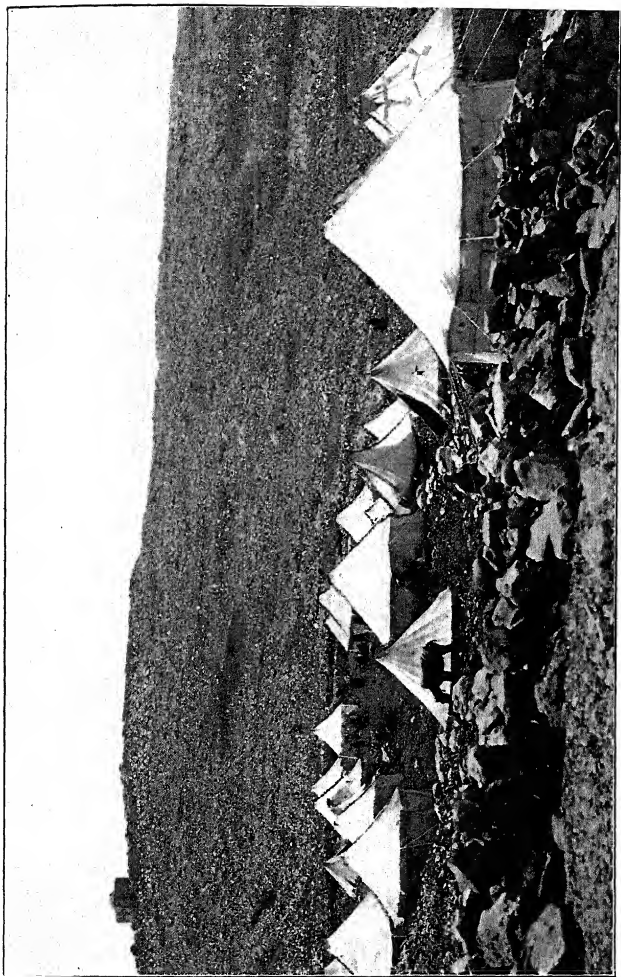
Biblical controversies in which the Samaritans have adhered to unpopular views have slowly but surely alienated them from other sects. They insist that the plagues of Egypt lasted but two and one-half months before the Exodus. They believe that the new calendar of the Jews dates from the Exodus, but they also believe that it was merely a re-establishment of the calendar dating from the creation. They believe that the Torah was written by the actual hand of God and that it was passed to Moses in a single scroll in a language that he could understand. They are particularly bitter against the Jews for the slander against Moses, which says that he was married to a negress, or Cushite woman, interpreting the word "kusheet" to be "kash-sheet," which means "fat, plump or beautiful."

All of these beliefs and minor differences of opinion, have, in the past, led to discussions and

quarrels which with the passing of the years and centuries have developed the animosities and hatreds that have gradually driven away the people who were once their friends. Strangest of all, however, is perhaps their strict adherence to the words of the prophets in regard to the Passover. This completely separates them from all other people of the world and makes it literally impossible for them at the present time, to live elsewhere than in the little community of Nablus which is in the shadow of Mount Gerizim. So it was of the celebration of the Passover that I asked Jacob to speak at length, and to each of my questions he had a passage of Scripture in reply, that from his point of view at least made debate or argument impossible.

First I asked him why he felt certain that Mount Gerizim was the place "chosen of the Lord," whereas the Jews have from ancient times ascribed that dignity to Mount Moriah at Jerusalem.

"Genesis xii:1," replied Jacob; "God told Abraham to move out of his land and he went to the land of Shechem, which we know is Nablus, and the Lord gave the land to his seed. Abraham was commanded to take Isaac into the land of Moreh (Genesis xxii:2). Jacob slept here when he saw the ladder (Genesis xxviii:7), and



CAMP OF THE SAMARITANS, MOUNT GERIZIM.



he came back to Shechem (Nablus) in peace" (Genesis xxxiii: 18).

"Why is the Passover celebrated to-day literally as it was commanded?"

"Exodus xii: 17, we are told to observe and fulfil this day in our generation as an eternal ordinance. Genesis xii: 24 repeats the same injunction and in Genesis xiii: 10 we are told to celebrate it from year to year."

"Why must a Samaritan live in Nablus?"

"At least he must be here for the Passover. In Deuteronomy xvi: 5, we are told that it is unlawful to celebrate it in other towns and the same passage tells us the date and that the celebration must be at sunset. Exodus xii: 4 permits the poor to join with their neighbours in the sacrifice, and, as we are very poor, we gather together as we have done for one hundred and twenty-five years and make one company having one furnace. During the celebration our people indulge greatly in praise, glorification and exultation and do not cease doing so throughout the night, Exodus xii: 42. We are told how we must be dressed, Exodus xii: 11; how we shall select the animals for our sacrifice, Exodus xii: 3; in the sixth verse how it shall be prepared for slaughter; how it shall be cooked in Exodus xii: 8-9—that is, broiled so that only fire and

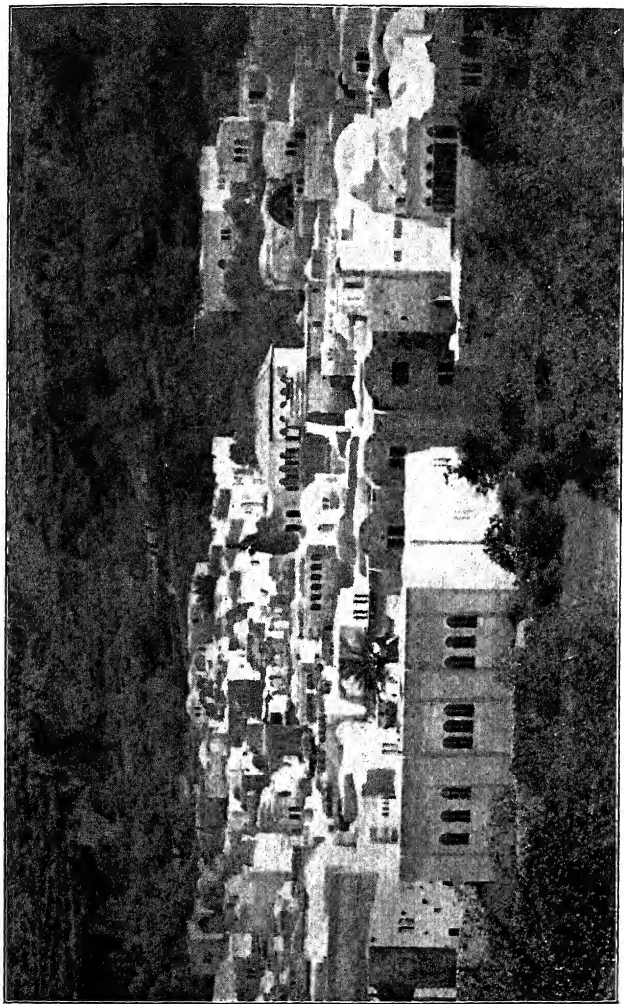
not water shall touch it; how it shall be eaten, Exodus xii:11 and Deuteronomy xvi:3; and with salt, Leviticus ii:13; and not a particle of it may remain, Exodus xii:10."

Occasionally Jacob would admit that a passage was capable of two or more meanings or translations, and when one different than the Samaritans accepted was suggested, he replied only: "God possesses the best knowledge."

The Passover celebration of the Samaritans is the event of their year. Every man, woman and child of the tribe is dressed in a white robe as if preparatory to starting on a journey, sheep are carefully selected, and in a stately procession they file to the top of Mount Gerizim, which they are certain is "the place chosen of the Lord," and where to the best of their ability the ordinances are carried out in strict accordance with biblical command.

As several elders of the tribe arrived at the house, apparently on business of some sort, Jacob told some of the younger men to take me to the synagogue to see the ancient copy of the Pentateuch, which Samaritan tradition declares was written by Aaron or a descendant of Aaron. There were several tourists there inspecting the manuscript and, as Jacob had said, they came eagerly enough, but they hesitated and argued





GENERAL VIEW OF NABLUS.



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when they were asked to contribute a shilling for the privilege that they had enjoyed.

As they were wrangling, Jacob came to the synagogue himself and after the other foreigners had left and I was preparing to leave, he asked me to remain until they were out of sight. Then, with a sort of malicious joy, he gave a signal to the boys and they approached the little altar, went behind draperies and brought forth an ancient bronze cylinder, which was opened and a parchment taken out.

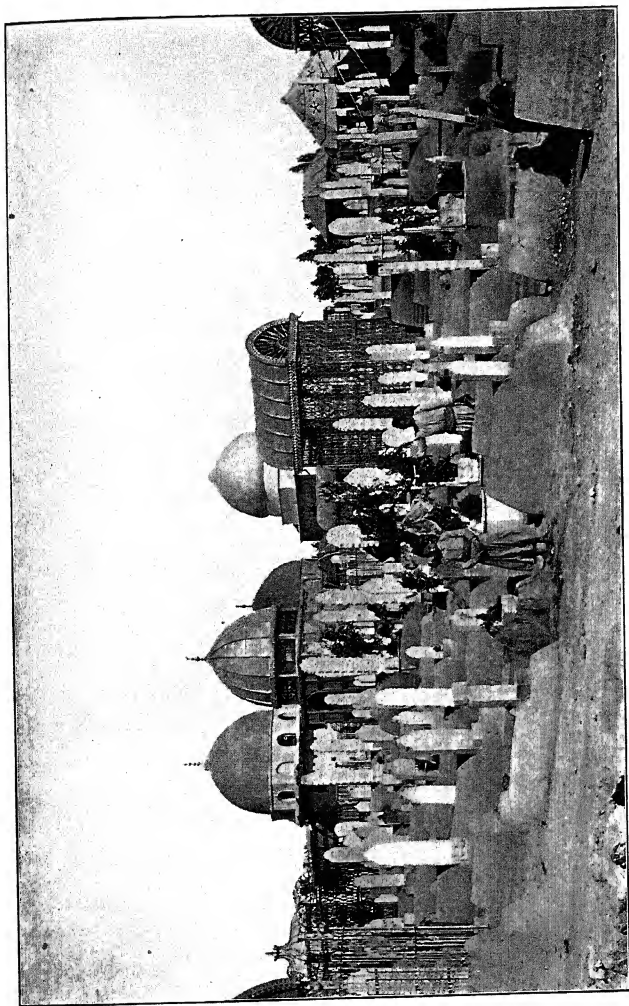
“This is our ancient Pentateuch,” said the Hight Priest. “We don’t show this to the tourists, for the other one satisfies them just as well, and they come to see it merely out of curiosity. That copy is spurious (pointing to the one seen by the earlier delegation to the synagogue), this one is the genuine.”

As we left Jacob and his people we soon found ourselves in the midst of Nablus hoodlums again. Although Nablus is the largest city in Palestine between Damascus and Jerusalem, it is isolated in the Valley of Shechem, untouched by a railroad and somewhat difficult to reach. Yet it has a population of nearly thirty thousand, is a prosperous city, and in many ways quite unlike any of the other towns one passes on the overland journey by the ancient caravan

route between the north and south of Palestine and Syria.

From infancy the children in this city are taught to despise and ridicule persons who do not subscribe to the Moslem faith. Consequently, as they grow up, this ridicule and hatred increases, and it is only the presence of a large number of Turkish soldiers who are commanded to keep order, that keeps the people in check at all, when a foreigner enters the city gates. Before we arrived at the city, having just left the Tomb of Joseph, we noticed that every one our wagon passed was spitting at us. The children by the roadside picked up sticks and pebbles and hurled them at the wagon, hissing the Arabic and Turkish words for "unbeliever," "Christian" and "infidel dog." As we entered the city and passed the cafés, where the ever-present groups of men were sitting smoking and drinking coffee, they looked up, sneered, laughed and brazenly hurled vile names at us to the amusement of the onlookers.

It seemed to be fate that led us past a Moslem cemetery, and as it was Friday all the women were there mourning and offering prayers for the dead. This desecration of sacred ground seemed to aggravate them and they yelled at us, seemingly forgetting their prayers. Men came



MOSLEM CEMETERY.




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running and shouting curses at "Christian dogs." Children threw sticks and again spat at us to show their contempt. Our guard and dragoman were kept busy threatening them with punishment if they did not desist, and soon they were joined by a third man in uniform, an official of some sort and probably a Christian, and the three of them were kept busier than the two had been, protecting two fairly innocent strangers who had happened to reach Nablus at sunset and necessarily remained over night before continuing the journey across the country. But Nablus has no use for strangers, unless they be of the Mohammedan faith. They are not wanted in the city at all and are things accursed. A railroad is now building that will join Nablus with Janin, and it is possible that more frequent contact with the outside world will have its effect in the enlightenment of the people. But even this will take time. The spirit of fanaticism is too deeply imbedded in the present generation, and some lively religious conflicts are expected before the people are finally brought into subjugation and toleration. Yet this is the city of Abraham, Jacob and his sons and so many patriarchs of biblical days that it is difficult to enumerate them.

## CHAPTER XIV

### A PROPHECY FULFILLED

“ HEREFORÉ, I will make of Samaria as a heap of the field. . . . And I will pour down the stones thereof into the valley.”

We were starting out on a sixty-mile drive across country, just after dawn, one fine morning in June, and as we rattled along on the road beyond Nablus our dragoman pointed to the top of a hill which was not different in appearance from any of the other hills that rise around the Valley of Shechem, saying: “Up there was the ancient city of Samaria, a great city in its day, but travellers don’t go there any more, for there’s nothing to see.”

And just because “travellers don’t go there any more,” and with the biblical curse and “wrath of God” upon the city, we wanted to see it. In more than one instance we had found in the Holy Land that biblical prophecy has been fulfilled to the letter. Perhaps here was another and apparent example. At any rate, find-



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ing out was worth the hour's climb that it would take to go to the top of the hill, so we told the driver to halt on the main road in the shade, while we started by a narrow donkey path for the summit, learning that it is also a path much frequented by camels, because before the palace of Herod the Great is now the threshing floor for the wretched little community that dwells half way up the hill, and camels are employed in carrying the product of the fields to the summit to be trampled upon and winnowed in the breeze that is ever blowing at this point.

But long before we began to make the rather steep ascent, and while we were still in the valley, we found that prophecy had been fulfilled to the letter as we had seldom seen it. Along the side of the crooked pathway were huge fragments of splendidly carved pillars that had once graced the porches of temples or palaces in the city on the hill. When we reached the crest of the hill we found that Samaria was "as a heap of the field," and everywhere in the valley pillars and blocks of granite were "poured down" into the gully through which a tiny stream runs when there is rain, which is not frequent. Here was one of the most magnificent examples of ruined grandeur that it had been our privilege to see in Palestine, and yet, as our

dragoman said, "travellers don't come here any more." They turn the rocks and soil over and over again in excavations at other points about which controversy wages, but they leave Samaria alone, yet here is offered one of the best fields for archæological research imaginable.

The people who live in the neighbourhood, poverty-stricken and very ignorant Mohammedans, have no incentive to erect stone buildings but live in mud huts; thus the giant columns lie where they fell centuries ago, unless they have moved by the action of the sands around them. The poor peasant sows his handful of grain in the depression near a mighty sarcophagus or monolith, and "travellers don't come here any more." I believe that an American expedition did some digging on the top of the hill some years ago and uncovered ruins that dated all the way from the Roman period back to the time of the Ahab; but for some reason or other interest seems to have drifted elsewhere, and the real excavating remains to be done and promises a rich reward to one who undertakes it and to the archæological world.

As we passed through the valley we met a weary peasant leading a big camel that had upon its neck the most beautiful camel bell I have ever seen. I told him that I wanted it, and he said

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he would take twenty francs for it. I reminded him that was a ridiculous amount to charge for a camel bell, even if it had been tolling its way across the desert for many years and had a romantic and sentimental interest for a stranger, so he said he would part with it for eighteen francs. I started to go away and he yelled "fifteen francs," but still I moved in the opposite direction and turned a deaf ear. Immediately I increased my speed and camel and driver never walked faster than did the gentleman of Samaria to drive a bargain. I finally bought the bell for seven francs, and although the peasant seemed pleased with the amount—because, as my dragoman reminded me, "it was a worn out old bell,"—he declared that he had lost money. His father had paid ten francs for it many years ago, when he purchased it from a Bedouin in the far desert near Bagdad. Thus I received the history of the bell for at least two generations, and it became more valuable to me every time the man added something in regard to its genealogy; nevertheless, I told him that he could have it back, if he had lost money, and he quickly turned around and ran away, afraid that I would want my money back.

And it appears that the "news" rapidly spread through the town, also that the peasant

arrived there before we did, because we stopped along the way to examine several ruins. As we walked through the streets of the little mud village men, women and children rushed from their houses with all the old camel bells in Samaria. It was an unheard of thing that a man should come to them who would give seven francs apiece for camel bells. They offered me the village supply at the same price, but one satisfied me and the other people frowned upon me in disappointment.

Apparently the ancient and mighty city was a series of terraces that covered the entire hill-top, and it is easy to believe, when viewing the ruins, that Samaria was once one of the powerful cities of Palestine, although not a single person lives in the city proper to-day and it is inhabited by the largest lizards in Palestine, some of them nearly a foot long and looking like young alligators. But they are harmless and dart away at the approach of man. Perhaps fifteen of them were sunning themselves on the broad steps that lead to the palace of Herod at the very summit of the hill, beneath which the excavators found ruins of three distinct Jewish periods dating back to when the earth was young, or at least when man was comparatively young upon it.

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We approach the city by the street of columns, many of which are still standing. This must have been a majestic avenue in its day, for although the columns have lost the capitals with which they were once adorned, they begin on one side of the hill, go over the hill, penetrating the city in the centre and to the valley on the other side of the hill, a length of fully one mile. They are sixteen feet in height, many of them monoliths, splendidly carved, and occur at intervals of a few feet, while the road which they bordered was twenty yards in width, something of a boulevard for an Oriental city, particularly one of the ancient type.

The city was guarded by magnificent gateways and towers which still remain, and from the ruins it is plain that the forum on the crest of the hill which Isaiah likened to a crown was highly ornamental, because there are splendidly carved benches of stone, little amphitheatres that were, perhaps, judgment halls, and seating not more than twenty or thirty people, altars, pulpits, divans and all sorts of decorative things, still in the position where they were placed during the reign of Herod.

Herod received the town from Augustus and renamed it Sebaste, the Greek for Augusta, and, as was his custom, he soon made it a city of great

importance architecturally. There is a legend, dating from about the fifth century, that John the Baptist was beheaded at this palace of Herod, and while there was an old Crusaders' church named after him, and there is a structure on the hillside to-day bearing St. John's name, the first mention of his execution having taken place in Samaria is by St. Jerome, and later writers have repeated the statement; but this is only one of four places that bear the same tradition. Herod had palaces scattered all over the land which he ruled and it is not just certain at which one of them occurred that spectacular dance of Salome which has been immortalized in literature, on canvas and in marble by so many of the world's artists.

It is strange, however, that the remains of Herod's palace perfectly suggest the setting for the story as it is read and staged to-day. As I climbed my way through its apartments, poking big lizards out of the path and attempting to obtain a peek at the foundation stones which are believed to have been put in place in the time of Omri (I Kings xvi: 24), I observed a cistern-like cavern beside the porch, over which the mammoth columns which now lie prostrate once raised a shading canopy. This, upon looking more closely, I observed to be not more than

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two feet wide at the top, while it was in the shape of a wide urn. Thus it would have been possible to drop a man into the top and he would be powerless to come out without assistance.

Perhaps it was into this well that John the Baptist was cast, and its stony sides and curves may have echoed forth his denunciations of the royal family, so that they were heard in the porch of the palace as if they had been shouted through a phonograph horn. Perhaps it was upon this terrace that Salome was walking that moonlight evening when she heard the voice and became fascinated by the man whom she caused to be brought forth from the well. Perhaps it was here that he spurned her advances of love and thereby incurred her wrath which resulted in his death. At least one visitor to Sebastieh, about twenty centuries later, liked to believe that he visited the palace in which the most celebrated dance in the world was executed, a dance that indirectly, at least, resulted in the martyrdom of a saint.

And yet, sitting here on the steps of Herod's palace, I recalled that what is taken for history by the popular mind has not been exactly fair to the daughter of Herodias. St. Mark records that she "danced and pleased," which became a favourite epitaph inscription upon the tombs

of Roman dancers. But while there is little reference to the lady by contemporary writers, owing to the fact that the actions of Eastern royal families were but a part of the great imperial policy and scarcely worthy of attention from Roman writers, men seemed to prefer that the guilt for John's death be lodged upon young beauty, although the planning and execution of it is plainly traceable to the mother of Salome, who probably lost caste with the people on account of the prophet's fulminations against her.

There is a mediæval legend that the "Almighty breathed His breath" upon Salome, so that she became a thing accursed and doomed to dance forever, similar to the "willies" met with in the folklore of southern Italy. An ancient manuscript shows Salome "vaulting before Herod," and conveying the impression that she executed a series of somersaults in the royal presence, on the occasion of his birthday party. There was nothing about Salome's feat in her own lifetime that warned her contemporaries of the fact that she was to become a notable character of history, along with Cleopatra and Zenobia, famed for their fascinating and fatal beauty, but men have preferred to ascribe to her a niche in the world's hall of fame, and her dancing exploits have fired the inspiration of



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the world's artists and poets, over three hundred famous paintings relating to her, perhaps as many as have been devoted to any saint. Writers have preferred to bring Salome to a tragic and sudden death immediately following the decapitation of John, but reliable history proves that she lived to be quite an old lady—her death occurred about 72 A. D.—and there is nothing to indicate that she suffered ostracism or undue notoriety during later life as a result of her dancing before Herod, the enormity of which seems to have occurred to men in a later day. Salome married a son of the King of Chalcis, who later mounted the throne, and had a medal struck with her image upon it, the only authentic portrait of Salome, who has been a “model” for so many of the world's painters.

Again we passed through the streets of columns on our descent of the mountain, again passed the former fountain basins, theatres and baths, coming into the miserable village where the women were taking their bread to a sort of community bakery. Either they are too lazy to have separate fires or fuel is too scarce, so they pound out flat cakes of wheat, mixed with water and resembling a pancake a foot in diameter, place twenty or thirty of them on a board and bring them to a big mud shell that resem-

bles a five-foot high bee hive with its low door. Each housewife placed her stock inside, a big fire was built and the smoke and heat no doubt "baked" it to the satisfaction of Samaria. In the village we noticed several rather large patches of tobacco plants, which plainly proved that the soil is adapted to tobacco culture.

In fact the soil in this neighbourhood seems adapted to almost any kind of culture. It has been bearing its crop year after year for thousands of years, and it continues to bear, although the inhabitants have become depraved, miserable creatures, who sometimes do not appear to show the intelligence of human beings. At the time of the Civil War in America, when the cotton crop suffered, cotton was planted in large quantities here around Sebastieh and Nablus and paid a tremendous profit, several Greeks having made their life fortunes in a few years. But little cotton grows here to-day. The olive trees require less attention, so do the grapevines and fig-trees. They bear oil and wine which always finds a market, so why worry about a crop that requires planting and cultivating annually?

The stop at ancient Samaria made us late in really starting on our long drive, but we felt well repaid for the delay as we tumbled along

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the dusty and stony roads during the rest of the day. This road was formerly the abode of thieves, and while all the peasants and native travellers still go armed with great long knives stuck in their belts and antiquated revolvers at their side, there has been little trouble of late years. The hundreds of caves by the roadside where highwaymen used to lurk are now empty, excepting as they are occupied by weary travellers and their donkeys, pausing for an hour's sleep on the long journey.

After many twistings and turnings in valleys and on hilltops, before the sun had set, we arrived at the Jewish colony of Zammarin, which is one of the oldest of the Zionists in Palestine and usually held up as an example. We arrived at the hotel and immediately hesitated on the veranda where several men were sitting. A plump German woman came up to us and said: "Yes, what is it?" We replied that first of all we wanted a bottle of Apollinaris.

"My husband he go away, and maybe he think I run this hotel, yes, but I show him the difference. You wait for Apollinaris water until my husband he come home." And we settled back in our chairs and waited.

The proprietor was away and his wife declined to be annoyed with guests. She declined

to serve even water, for which we petitioned her, but as we sat on the porch of her "hotel," dusty, dry and rather disgusted with the condition of things, a messenger arrived with a letter. It was addressed to Newman and myself and contained a pressing invitation for us to occupy the quarters of a gentleman we had met by chance at Nablus the night before. It happened that he was the general representative of Edmond Rothschild in Palestine and he maintained quarters which have received the financial help of the philanthropist. No invitation was ever more readily accepted, and, fatigued by the day's travel, we called the hotel man's wife and fairly boasted that we would not require the hospitality of her roof. As we left the place she said: "Maybe my husband he think I run his hotel for him—I guess not." Yet we heard afterward that this hotel and its furnishings had been given to the people who managed it by Rothschild, so that travellers to Zammarin might be comfortably lodged during their visit and obtain the right impression of Jewish hospitality in interior Palestine.

Zammarin seems to have been pampered by Rothschild. He did much for the colony to give it a start, and it got such a good start that the people became somewhat indolent, engaged na-

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tives to work for them and did not find it exactly necessary to work as the founder of the colony had thought would be necessary. Many of the first settlers here were Roumanian Jews, and the Jews who come from Roumania are farmers, although it is said in some quarters that the Jewish people have not cared for agriculture for centuries. The colony looks something like a western American mining town. There are substantial stone houses, neat little dooryards filled with flowers and having kitchen gardens. Here, again, the Jew becomes the example worthy of following to the native, for he does things better than the native is able to do them and consequently reaps a better reward.

In the centre of the colony there is a big wine press, capable of producing about one hundred and fifty thousand gallons of wine a year, which is in demand in Egypt and Germany—although one of the colonists told me that most of the product is labelled “Richon le Zion,” the other Jewish colony nearer to Jaffa, and thus finds a better market in foreign countries. There is a synagogue, a town hall, school-houses, and public parks having some splendid palms and subtropical plants. An air of prosperity pervades the place, and it could perhaps have no

better recommendation than was given it by a man with whom I talked. He said: "No boy born in Zammarin has ever found it necessary to go elsewhere to make a living. That should be ample recommendation."

But the chief interest for me in the place consisted in an interview at his home with Aaron Aaronson, who has had much publicity on account of the fact that he was the discoverer of the native wheat—a most important discovery, although it does not appear to be so in the mere statement of the fact. Aaronson now has charge of the experiment station outside of Zammarin, which we visited with him, and he is conducting a series of experiments that may completely change the condition of Palestine, because he is showing the farmers that with just about the same amount of labour, under the same weather conditions, they may produce much better crops, and proving to them that foreign varieties of grain, for instance those from Tunis and Algeria, may flourish in Palestine and produce better crops than the native varieties. And he is showing the farmers, who seem to have forgotten the fact in the present generation, that despite its dryness, Palestine is in reality an agricultural country, capable of producing dozens of valuable products which

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might do much to relieve the poverty of the peasants in the country and small villages.

I found Aaronson in a little white-washed cottage in the midst of a tropical garden that looked like a greenhouse at home, and admitted to him freely that I had called out of curiosity because I wanted to see the discoverer of wheat. He laughed, and proved to me a few minutes later that he had also found the original parent of barley and oats; but he said he had been so busy with his many experiments that he had not had time to write to the scientific journals of the world in regard to these latter discoveries, and was quite contented to rest on his laurels as the discoverer of the kernel from which the staff of life is made.

“I was born here at Zammarin,” he said, “but I went off to Europe to school and it was when I came back, with my mind not exactly settled upon a future career, that I became interested in Palestine as the cradle of one of the important things in our civilization. To me it was a philosophical matter, and I thought of it in that light until two German professors further stimulated my interest by giving it as their opinion that wheat originally came from somewhere between Egypt and Mesopotamia. So I started out looking for native wheat—a rather hope-

less expedition at the time, for I was obliged to wander all over the country. Once I thought I found a trace of it in Galilee, but then I thought I was mistaken and looked elsewhere. Then I was rewarded by finding the genuine article on Mount Hermon; but since that time I have also found it near the Dead Sea and elsewhere. All the botanists and practical scientists who had looked for the wheat had theretofore made the mistake of supposing that the native wheat must be stunted and small and that wheat has been improved by centuries of cultivation. But, suddenly I decided to work on another theory, that wheat had degenerated during the centuries and that the original article was better than our cultivated varieties are to-day. In this way I found native wheat, and immediately the scientific journals all over the world wrote laudatory things about me; but as a matter of fact I merely called attention to what plenty of other men had seen—only there were nice large ears on the wheat and they naturally supposed that what they saw was the cultivated variety.

“It was rather surprising to me, the interest that this attracted in the scientific world, because, as I said before, I cared more to think of what wheat had meant in the evolution of



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mankind—that is, I cared more for the philosophy of the thing than for its scientific importance. But as I thought of it more and more, I came to the conclusion that this discovery might have a humanitarian value. The scientists have estimated, for example, that the rust that attacks wheat costs between \$7,000,000 and \$8,000,000 a year. Now, rust does not attack native wheat; therefore, in one country think of the saving that might become possible. We have conducted many experiments and we have never found rust on this wheat to this day. Native wheat will grow with less rain than any variety of wheat known. It saves labour, because after it is planted it will grow practically as it grows in its wild state. It will withstand greater heat and greater cold than any wheat with which we have experimented. Our scorching sirocco mows down other varieties, but it does not injure this. We are now crossing this wheat with many foreign varieties and we are watching the experiments with great anxiety, because upon the result of these observations millions of dollars may depend, and the welfare of whole nations.”

“So you consider cereals the agricultural hope of Palestine?” I asked.

“On the contrary,” he replied, “I believe

that orchards, rather than cereals, will benefit our people, particularly our Jewish colonists who are working to make the soil produce as it did in the days of their fathers. But there I am reminded of an interesting thing. After all of our scientific experiments with olives—one of the best and most profitable crops in Palestine—after we had brought trees from Spain, France and from California, and made them produce olives as large as the ordinary walnut, we found that the native Syrian knew best, after all. His little hard variety, not much larger than a cherry, contained more oil than our large varieties. So we give them credit for the best olive, although our predecessors have been unwilling to do so.”

So much has been written about the impossibility of making the modern Jew a successful farmer I was glad to ask an authority in the field his opinion in regard to the matter.

“I believe the Jews as farmers in Palestine are best compared to the German colonists, for they work under somewhat the same conditions. In intensive cultivation, for instance with orchards, the average record of the Jewish farmer is better than the best of the Germans. But take the general cereal crop and the best record made by the Jewish farmer is no better than

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the average of the German farmer. But we should remember that for two thousand years the Jew as been drifting away from agriculture. But he can drift back to the occupation of his ancestors—and he is proving here in Palestine that he is anxious to do so. Farming pays for the Jews around Zammarin, and it will pay elsewhere, if properly conducted. And our colonists like it. The climatic conditions are about as they are in southern California, so we are working hand in hand with the experiment stations in that state, and we are deriving some mutual benefits.

“In regard to Zionism? Well, personally, I am a Zionist, and believe in the movement back to Palestine, but I do not consider it particularly necessary for the Jew who comes back to Palestine to make his home to believe as we do. If he’s here—and this is the place for him, and remember I speak as one who has been much in Europe and even in America—that’s the principal thing. When a man makes an application for citizenship in America, you do not consider it necessary to ask him whether he is going to be a Republican or a Democrat. Well, much the same thing applies to Zionists. I believe there are only about six men in the world who are thinkers and who profess Zionism, yet be-

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lieve that the time will come when the Jews will form a political body in Palestine and again become a nation. The rest of us believe that Palestine is the place for us, not politically but socially and culturally."

Mr. Aaronson showed us where he is experimenting with American sweet corn and he is having excellent results, as he is with many other American seeds that have come to him. He also showed us many perfume producing plants from which medical extracts are made, which suggests that there is a hopeful future for Palestine in that direction.

And after he had led us to the boundaries of the station grounds he showed us what would be a curiosity in America: several "farms" which were but three feet wide and five hundred feet long. These strips of land are owned by separate landlords, who are able to plow about three furrows between the piles of stone which have been cleared from the land, "as they do it at the agricultural station," proving that Aaronson's experiments have not been in vain, because he has caused some of the natives to clear up ground which has been strewn with stones since the chariots of the Romans dashed along this way.

And the chariots certainly did follow this

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route, because over near the sea there are the fairly well preserved ruins of the Crusaders' city of Dor, one of the last of their strongholds in Palestine, and from the experiment station road to the entrance to Dor, which is carved through the solid rock, there is a well-made Roman road with huge blocks of paving into which a pair of deep ruts remain, showing the marks left by chariot wheels. But Dor is uninhabited. The road has become one for an occasional donkey rider to the seashore. The region seems dead, but Aaronson, the experimental agriculturist, through the contributions of American and European Jews, is doing wonders to cause it to live again.

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## CHAPTER XV

### THE SLOPES OF MOUNT CARMEL

**I**T seems remarkable that one of the most beautiful of all towns or cities in Syria and Palestine is not mentioned in the Bible. There is enough filth and rubbish and laziness in the older part of the city to indicate that it stands on ancient foundations, and its proximity to beautiful Mount Carmel, which seems always to have been holy in the eyes of the people hereabouts, would indicate that its beautiful harbour was in use a long time before the dawn of our era. But Haifa owes its historical significance to two things: It was captured by Tancred the Crusader in the twelfth century, and it was visited in 1898 by the German Kaiser, and strange as it may seem, this latter event is spoken of by the inhabitants of Haifa as if as much importance attached to it as to real historical incidents. But perhaps the coming of the Emperor did mean more to the citizens of Haifa than seems to be apparent. Haifa has been regenerated by the Ger-

mans. Certain parts of the city have not felt the "influence" as they should, but the German colonists, who were the first to receive a firman from the Sultan granting them the right to own property in their own names in the Holy Land, have done wonders there. They have made a model settlement with churches, hotels, schools and several notable business places. And they have erected fine homes, which are surrounded by gardens, and show the natives how it is possible to live in comfort. In this colony are many Americans, and much of the present prosperity of the place is due to the efforts of the late Jacob Schumaker of Buffalo, who selected the site of the German part of the city and laid other plans that have brought prosperity to his native countrymen.

Here, as elsewhere in Palestine, when it became known that the Kaiser was to journey this way, great preparations were made for the Imperial comfort and pleasure. Where mere camel tracks had been for many years, roads were built, and at Haifa a pier was built, so the Emperor might put his foot on something solid when he left the Mediterranean ship.

And Kaiser Wilhelm did everything in his power apparently to show his appreciation of the honour paid to him, and throughout his tour of

Palestine impressed the throngs of people who gathered to see him with being "every inch a king." All the natives seem to understand that the Sultan cannot pay them a personal visit. "He must stay and watch throne at Constantinople," a Syrian explained to me one day, proving that he had a clearer understanding of real conditions than one might have imagined. But in view of the impossibility of a visit from the Sultan, the journey of the Sultan's friend, the Kaiser, was looked upon as being a much more important event than the visit of a mere reigning monarch. Here was one of the great men of the earth, and his welcome at Haifa was the biggest event in the history of the city. Men sang the hymns of the Fatherland, children scattered flowers in his path, and his progress was like the return of a great conquering hero. And the Kaiser, mindful of the importance of his visit, caused appropriate bronze tablets to be erected at important points to recall his visit to future generations. The day after his arrival, he visited the schools of Haifa and expressed his pleasure by ordering new furniture for them from Germany. He went to the soap factories where the Germans are making some of the best "Castile" soap on the market, and after an Imperial inspection of everything in the

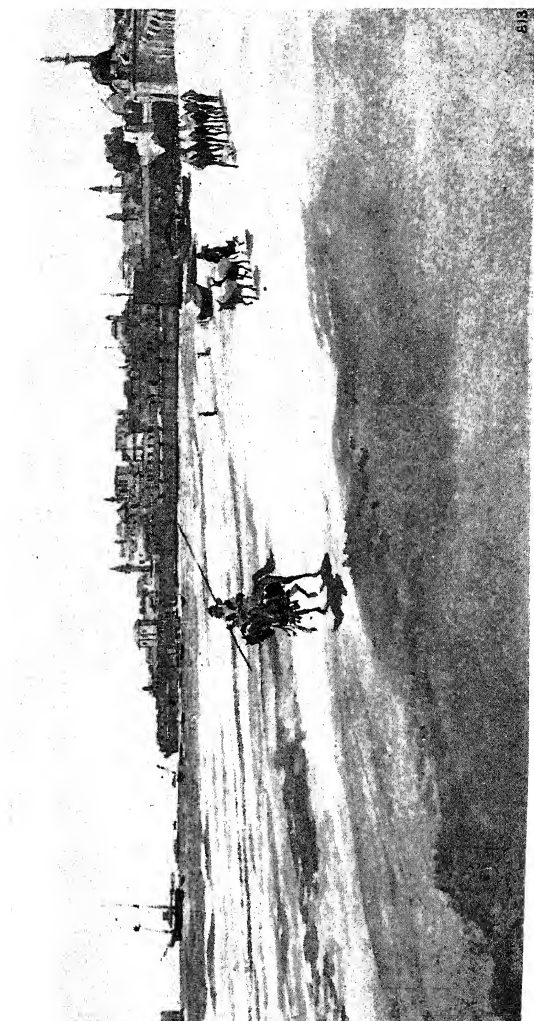


colony he said he was so delighted that he would grant them an annual subsidy of four thousand marks. Verily, here was an emperor worthy of the name, and all Palestine rang with his praises. We found but one place where his impressive dignity seemed to have received a check. At the tomb of Saladin he signified a desire to honour the hero by placing a wreath of flowers at his head. And, afterwards, he sent back a wreath that would not wither, to take the place of his flowers. The Mohammedan authorities would not permit flowers from a Christian to defile this tomb perpetually, so a little alcove was built on one side of the tomb, and the Emperor's tribute was placed behind glass where it could be seen by visitors to the tomb and yet not be within the tomb itself. But a more important result of the Emperor's visit was that since he came and went, the Turkish officials have given the German colonists less trouble, they have been less extortionate in the collection of "taxes" and have taken fewer exceptions to the improvements of "infidels" who are considered their most natural prey.

But Haifa has nothing to hold pilgrims and travellers long, although a German hotel-keeper assured me that the time would come when European people would hold its advantages over

those of Mediterranean cities like Algiers and make of it a fashionable winter resort. Perhaps if some of the travellers, those seeking climate and novelty instead of holy places, knew what they were going into, when they plunge into the interior of Palestine, they would stay longer beneath the protecting shadow of the German eagle in the hospitable German hotels. But it lacks historical interest, so people who land here from the boats that cruise along the Syrian shore from Port Saïd, Alexandria and European ports, hurry off to Mount Carmel or inland, after perhaps making the excursion to the very interesting city of Acre, which lies about six miles across the bay.

I went to Acre chiefly because I thought I would find there a prisoner of Turkey whom I wished very much to see, Abbas Effendi, the Persian head of the Bahia Movement, or the Babists and Babites, as they are called in America. Chance favoured me, and I found him elsewhere, but in Acre I was informed that he had been released, after a confinement of something like forty years, and, being a free man, he had immediately left Acre, which seems to be a city at the end of the world, an unhealthful city, owing to its position by a big marsh from which malarial odours constantly rise, and a city





to which the former Sultan of Turkey, Abdul Hamid, condemned all his political suspects, religious leaders and the men of action whom he wanted to be watched day and night.

St. Paul once spent a day at Acre (Acts xxi:7) but the biblical account may mean that he merely called within the city gates. It would be difficult to imagine a Christian spending an entire day there unless he was obliged to do so. Along with Nablus, it is one of the most fanatical cities in Syria. Most of the inhabitants seem either to be political prisoners, the descendants of prisoners, or soldiers guarding prisoners. And they are practically all rampant Mohammedans. They spit at Christians and hurl vile epithets at them. After enduring a morning of it, I asked the dragoman how it was that such apparently ignorant people could tell that we were Christians.

"Neither of you have a moustache or chin whiskers," he replied. "You observe they all have hair on their faces, as they are commanded to have. People who do not have, are dogs."

It is possible to sail across the bay in less than two hours, but we preferred the unique journey by land, because the road between Haifa and Acre is merely the broad beach of the bay, and

instead of driving on the sandy beach, which is hard, like some of our summer resort beaches in America, the horses plunge into the sea at Haifa, and they do not leave it until they reach the first fortification at Acre. They splash along, three abreast, knee-deep in the water, pulling the wagon, which most of the time is up to the hubs. It is a novel experience, but the natives seem to be used to it, and although everybody knows that the beach is somewhat treacherous, containing many pools of quicksand, the drivers seem to trust to luck, knowing that the beach changes every day from the action of the surf. Donkeys with their riders and produce for the Haifa market, wade along knee-deep, as do the pedestrians. The sand is a little harder underfoot, perhaps, but there is also friction caused from walking in the water, but it is the custom, established by long precedent, and assuredly the East follows precedent.

About half way to Acre we met a peasant wading along with a big basket of ripe mulberries on his head. He said he wanted sixpence for them and we didn't give him a chance to hesitate in his price. He grinned, handed us the basket and started back for Acre. He had saved himself considerable travel and was pleased with the bargain he had made. As we were nibbling

the black fruit, we looked out on the beach and saw an old woman sitting beside a mud hut violently shaking a goat skin, which was hung on a stick and swayed back and forth as she punched and wiggled it. We stopped, went up to her and inquired why she was going through such vigorous motions, and she explained to us that she was making butter. This was the only churn she had. Her young son, who came out of the hut, brought us stools to sit upon, and we offered the woman a shilling if she would pose for a photograph for our collection of photographs of primitive domestic and agricultural implements in use in Palestine. We offered the woman and her son some mulberries, which they ate ravenously. Unthinkingly, I pulled a couple of apricots from my pocket and ate them and threw the pits on the sand. The boy grabbed them, cracked them between two stones and ate the kernels as a dog gnaws a bone. They were half starved, this pair, and yet they were not unlike many others that we met with everywhere. The woman was making a little butter, but she would not think of eating it herself or permitting her son to do so. It would bring her money that would buy a little meal and that would keep them alive for many days—perhaps until there was more butter, probably from

the milk of a flock of goats which we observed nibbling at the weeds on the beach.

If Haifa has no ancient history that lack is amply supplied by the little city across the bay. Many noble fleets have sailed into the waters under its fortresses, many famous warriors have marched within its battlements, Napoleon being an exception, because he was repulsed here and never entered the city. The city was one of importance at several times during its existence. Several neighbouring cities, like Cæsarea, were plundered of marble and granite columns to enhance its architecture. There are many famous men buried within its walls. And yet to-day Acre seems to be little more than a vast penitentiary or penal colony, strongly fortified. The harbour is filled with sand by the tides that come sweeping around Mount Carmel into the bay, and the ships of the world may no longer venture close to its docks. It is a rotten and half dead thing, very typical of the government of Turkey, to which it belongs. There are no industries, and every one seems to live off every one else, for, of course, there are political prisoners there who have considerable wealth and are permitted to live in their own homes, although they are under constant surveillance. But the ancient fortresses of the Crusaders are



used as the Sultan's prisons, and they are said to be full most of the time. Every one seems to hate every one else and all combine in their hatred of Jews and infidels. During the holy week of Ramadan, the Mohammedan festival, it is not safe for Christians to go on the streets, and visitors at Haifa are warned not to cross the bay. It is said that none of the Sultan's soldiers here are Christians, because Turkey does not trust them, and they might be held responsible for any of the disorders that are constantly happening.

On the return journey around the bay Carmel constantly raises its head and naturally lures a traveller to its heights. This mountain seems to have been held sacred by all people from a period antedating positive history. The name means "vineyard" and is construed to mean "vineyard of God." The entire mountain is walled in and is owned by the wealthy order of Carmelite monks, who like to believe that their order was founded by Elijah. We drove up to the "mother house" of the order, which has a chapel enclosing the cave where the Prophet Elijah is said to have lived and taught. It is a beautiful drive, because the hillsides are covered with olive and fig trees and grapevines, thyme and even orchids. It is a favourite drive

for the citizens of Haifa on a holiday. It was here that Elijah fought his great duel with the priests of Baal and won a victory by calling down fire from heaven. While the exact spot now pointed out to tourists may not be correct, just as the particular cave in which he dwelt may not, it is certain that he lived here for many years, and the cave itself contains inscriptions in Greek older than the Christian era. Tacitus accepted it, as did the Emperor Vespasian and the Greek philosopher Pythagoras, who spent some time here on a journey from Greece to Egypt.

I wandered around Carmel with a Carmelite monk who told me many believable and many unbelievable things about the famous mountain and what had transpired on its slopes. Almost all religions have erected monuments of some sort on its slopes. Around these the monks gather herbs and flowers and brew a chartreuse and sweet smelling water which is called Eau de Melisse and is supposed to be a panacea.

The Carmelites believe that St. Anne, the mother of the Virgin Mary, often ascended the hill to pray, bringing her daughter, then a little girl, with her. They say that St. Anne told the fathers that in reward for their faithful service she would seek special intercession for them in

heaven. I believe, however, that the direct promise did not come to them until the brown scapular of Our Lady of Mount Carmel was handed to St. Simon Stock, superior-general of the Carmelites of the West, at Cambridge, England, July 16, 1251, when he saw the Mother of God in a celebrated vision and received the scapular from her hands with the words: "Receive, my beloved son, this scapular of thy order; it is the special sign of my favour which I have obtained for thee and for thy children of Mount Carmel. He who dies clothed with this habit, shall be preserved from eternal fire." I heard from the monk many "fully authenticated accounts" of miraculous escapes from death by wearers of the little square of brown felt, which formerly could be worn only with the sanction of the order, but is now possible to any one who cares to purchase the scapular from the monk at the mother house on Mount Carmel, who offers them along with the fragrant water and post cards.

The vision and scapular have been called into question by certain writers, but Pope Benedict XIV among others accepted it as genuine and indulgences granted by several pontiffs have assumed its genuineness. The Roman Church declares that any devout servant may be in-

vested with it, according to the formula prescribed by Pope Leo XIII. At one time persons so invested had their names enrolled with the Carmelite fathers at Rome, but Pope Gregory XVI dispensed with that obligation. The Church says that the Blessed Virgin made the promise to Pope John XXII to withdraw promptly from purgatory, especially on the first Saturday after death, associates of the scapular of Carmel. According to the stories that I heard from the monk, the scapular seems to be strikingly efficacious in battle and shipwreck. The famous shrine of St. Anne de Beaupre near Quebec—one of the best known on the American continent—was founded by storm-tossed sailors who are said to have called upon St. Anne in their hour of greatest danger and to have vowed that they would erect a shrine to her if they reached land alive; also it has been said that there was a brown scapular worn by at least one member of the crew.

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## CHAPTER XVI

### THE HOME OF JESUS

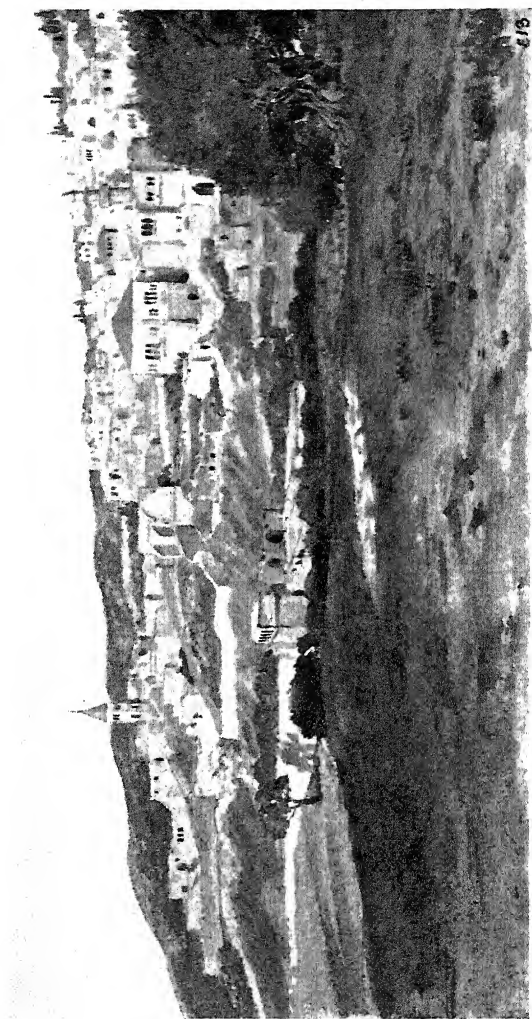
**I**T was just at sunset one Sunday evening when I arrived at Nazareth, and although I was disappointed at the time, because there was a curiosity to get at least one passing glimpse of this home of Jesus Christ during His boyhood and manhood, before the morning, I was soon glad that my arrival was so happily timed, because I gained my first impression of Nazareth by sitting out on a little balcony at the hotel and viewing it in the light of a beautiful full moon. As the light became brighter the landscape became more distinct in outline. I could see the very modern Nazareth, the little group of white houses on the hillside, all with their gardens shut off from white walks by white walls, but these did not interest me so much. All around me were the hills, big hills that become the size of small mountains when seen distinctly. And hills do not change with the passing of the centuries!

It seems likely that there is little of Nazareth

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that remains just as it was when Jesus was a boy and walked its streets, playing with the other boys in the village, or toddling along beside His mother as she went to the spring to draw water for the family each morning and each evening. But the hills! Certainly Jesus wandered over those hills as He played with His companions, and certainly He walked there when He had reached manhood and was about to undertake His mission into the wide world that lay beyond the little village where His father was a carpenter, and according to the most recent scientific opinion, doubtless dwelt with His family in a cave-like house, partly hidden in the natural rock and partly built up of mud and stones, not dissimilar to those houses which one meets in all small villages in Palestine.

Nazareth is a very modern little town that no doubt has profited greatly by its fame as the home of the Holy Family. In the time of Jesus, however, it was no doubt much less imposing than to-day even, and before Him it could not have been of much importance because it is not mentioned in the Old Testament at all, and the name of "Nazarene" was applied as an epithet of derision, first to Christ Himself and then to His disciples. Its streets are crooked and narrow, dirty and slippery on the slopes of the hill,







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despite the cleaner appearance of the houses that one expects after having visited a few Oriental cities. But I was to find out these things later. When I first arrived I merely saw the moon rise and saw Nazareth seem to fade back nearly two thousand years, as the environs of the city or town became plainly visible. Convent and monastery bells were tolling and chiming, much as they do in Jerusalem, for many orders have erected buildings here that their members may at least come for a season to the place where Jesus spent so much of His life.

I am told that the usual tourist merely spends a few hours in Nazareth. He wants to see Jerusalem and its environs when he is on a pilgrimage of the Holy Land, but he seems to forget that while many of the important events transpired in Jerusalem, relating to the life of Christ, the greater part of His life was spent in this neighbourhood. Doubtless, He strolled along the same trails around the hills that are followed by camels and donkeys to-day, as their muffled riders visit the surrounding towns in the pursuits that could not have changed much since the dawn of Christianity in the world.

The hotel is situated at the entrance to the town, and in the moonlight I observed a strange procession of people going in and out. A group

of nuns came along. They had been to some sanctuary on a neighbouring hill. They were followed by a group of drunken Mohammedans—although it is generally believed that Mohammedans never drink intoxicating liquors—and these young sports of the town were singing lewd songs as they strutted along eight abreast, blocking the path for every one else. A group of Greek priests followed them, on their way back to the monastery. And coming the other way were many women and girls who had visited Mary's Fountain—supposed to be the same as it was in the time of the Virgin, to draw the supply of water for the next day. They walked along rapidly, balancing either antique jugs or Standard Oil cans on their heads, chatting as they walked. Then a belated camel train entered the city from the district beyond, the drivers yelling hoarsely at the plodding animals which walked along toward the khan where they would be relieved of their burdens and find a night's rest.

Finally the pedestrians became fewer and fewer. The shouting and Arabic songs on a phonograph from a neighbouring café died away. The coffee drinkers, who had been squatting outside with their narghiles, got up one by one and departed for home. Nazareth retires

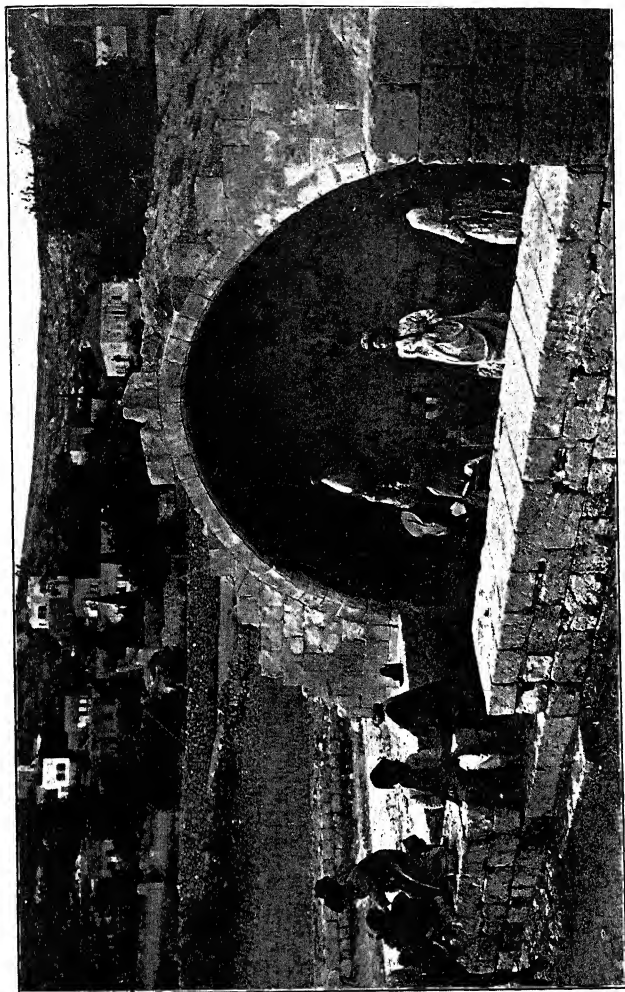
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early, or at least it seemed so that Sunday night as I watched. By nine o'clock the streets were quite deserted. At ten o'clock all was still and only a few candles flickered from neighbouring windows as I lit my own and prepared for bed. But the bells continued to ring—and they rang all night. Some religious order or other seems to be holding service at all hours of the night. The hotel-keeper, a German, tells me that the residents of the place soon become accustomed to them and do not hear their clanging, but with strangers it is a different matter. There is likely to be little sleep at Nazareth the first night—and most of the pilgrims, as before noted, tarry here but one night, as they go further into Galilee, or take the carriage road for Haifa.

It is a pleasant drive from Haifa. One passes many rugged hills of barren rock, many dirty villages, mostly inhabited by Mohammedans, and at times the road seems to be monotonous; but in the valleys there is much vegetation, olive and fig trees abound, and after the last valley is reached the driver points to several towering evergreen trees on a distant hill, visible at a single turn in the road. "There is Nazareth," he says; "beyond that hill is Galilee." This meant nothing to him, no more than any point of local geography with which any

one is familiar; but as he stopped to rest the horses I walked ahead. There was a fascination to the name "Galilee." For some reason I wanted to see it for the first time quite alone. So I walked ahead, finally reached the brow of the hill, and a beautiful landscape spread itself before me. Mount Tabor lifted itself in a great rounded knoll and the snow-clad top of Mount Hermon was visible in the distance, while Mount Carmel was off there in the west with its long point in the sea. There also was the Mount of the Beatitudes, and its gradual slope from Nazareth seems to coincide perfectly with the scriptural account of the Sermon on the Mount and the miracle of feeding the multitude with loaves and fishes. The location of this latter is agreed to by both the Greek and Roman churches, and when they agree the disinterested person may be quite certain that the site must be correct. From this hill can be seen the great caravan route between Damascus and Egypt, which has been in use for upwards of forty centuries, and was no doubt travelled by most of the men whose names are mentioned in the Bible.

I sat down by the roadside and waited for the wagon, watching a crowd of reapers in the field near by as they cut their little bundles of wheat, no bigger than their wrists, and carried



MARY'S FOUNTAIN, NAZARETH.



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them to the heap, where the oxen or camels would be driven over them for "threshing." A couple of tortoises crawled along past me and raised their heads from their shells to look at the stranger. Their pace seemed fairly typical of everything else about them. Galilee is asleep, excepting for the awakening given it by the rattle of wagons that in season carry pilgrims to and fro over its roads. Nazareth itself is a strange little place to have been the scene of such tremendous happenings in the world's history.

It has been repeatedly stormed and sacked by invaders, but the battles that have been fought in the town have not been deemed worthy of extended mention by the historians. But perhaps it could not have been much of a city on account of the lack of water supply.

In the centre of the town there is what is known as Mary's Fountain, and here, enclosed by ancient stone walls and a stone roof, a stream of water gushes forth, as it has for centuries, supplying practically all the water for the city. Thus it is positive that Joseph and Mary drew their water supply from the same source, and as the fountain seems to be the principal meeting-place and news centre, it is just likely that Jesus often sat here in the evening with His

companions and discussed the little affairs of the day, as the descendants of ancient Nazarenes do to this day. Strolling about the narrow streets around the fountain one enjoys at least a single emotion that he does not experience elsewhere. All at once Jesus becomes human. Elsewhere His divinity and superhuman attributes are more apparent. In Nazareth one who permits himself to ponder the past as he is viewing the present, sees the Saviour of Men as a young man among men, a native of this village, in appearance not so unlike the other young men who were His associates and companions.

Nazareth has about ten thousand population, but it seems that a considerable number in this figure includes visitors. It is said that there are no Jews in the city, and, while some of them carry on business here in the daytime, at night they retire beyond the city gates on account of an ancient prejudice.

The visitor hears many conflicting stories in regard to the holy places. Various denominations point out different places for the same event, all of which is more or less confusing to the stranger. It is quite likely that the only authentic spot in the city itself is Mary's Fountain. Jesus lived here for about thirty years, previous to taking up His public ministry, but



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little is recorded of His life in Nazareth. The Roman Catholics point to the Church of the Annunciation as the exact spot upon which the Angel Gabriel appeared to the Virgin. Under this church there is a cave and pilgrims wend their way hither, believing that they are visiting the home of Joseph and Mary. In fact, you are shown the "kitchen" of the house, which was perhaps an ancient cistern, and the Franciscan who showed us around said that while the "kitchen" might not be authentic, he was certain of the remainder of the house. The orthodox Greeks have built a church over another site where they believe the Annunciation occurred. Perhaps neither of the places is correct, for Nazareth has been destroyed several times in the last two centuries, and it is likely that "exact spots" passed from sight forever.

When we went to Mary's Fountain several pretty girls were there filling their jugs and cans with water. They have been spoiled by tourists and have become self-conscious. When we asked them to pose for a photograph they struck attitudes which they considered artistic and while they did so bargained with us in regard to their pay. They had posed at Mary's Fountain before; it is a profitable business in Nazareth, for pilgrims or tourists are usually

standing near the place and they are usually waiting for "typical" Nazarene girls to come that way.

There is a considerable revenue to the city from embroidery and lace made by the women, which is placed in the hands of experienced and quite wonderful saleswomen. They meet you on the street and tell wonderful stories about the distress of their families which you will relieve if you purchase their goods. One girl told me that her father was a hopeless paralytic, her mother was a bedridden invalid and her brother was a hopeless drunkard. "Buy my lace, dear sir," she pleaded, "buy it, for it is very cheap." The dragoman assured me that he knew the girl from past experiences. None of the stories she told was true, but she found it profitable to lie, and being a Mohammedan, she did not care, because she was merely taking advantage of Christian dogs.

There are few "sights" as the tourist sees them elsewhere in Nazareth. There is a mountain which closely resembles the rather meagre description of the Mount of Precipitation, where the inhabitants brought Jesus Christ after casting Him out of the city. But this, like most of the other spots, is not positively identified. About all that is certain is that this is Nazareth,

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which was the home of the Holy Family, and that Christ spent most of His life in the immediate neighbourhood. But every trace of His sojourn has disappeared, while a modern town has planted itself upon the ancient site.

## CHAPTER XVII

### THE SHORES OF GALILEE

**I**F the road followed anything like a straight line, which no road in Palestine does, I cause most of them follow crooked camel trails, one might almost think it possible to slide on a toboggan from Nazareth to Tiberias and the Sea of Galilee. There is a descent from something like one thousand two hundred feet above the sea level of the Mediterranean to something like seven hundred feet below the level of the tide. The Sea of Galilee, like the Dead Sea, is in a great natural sink, and the two are connected by the Jordan River, which is about the most active object in the province. The towns and cities that must have formerly lined the route to the beautiful city of Herod are dead and passed to decay, as are those cities that must have lined the beautiful shore of the inland sea. Tiberias is about the only human habitation worthy of the name that one passes on the half-day drive.

But it is one of the most interesting of all

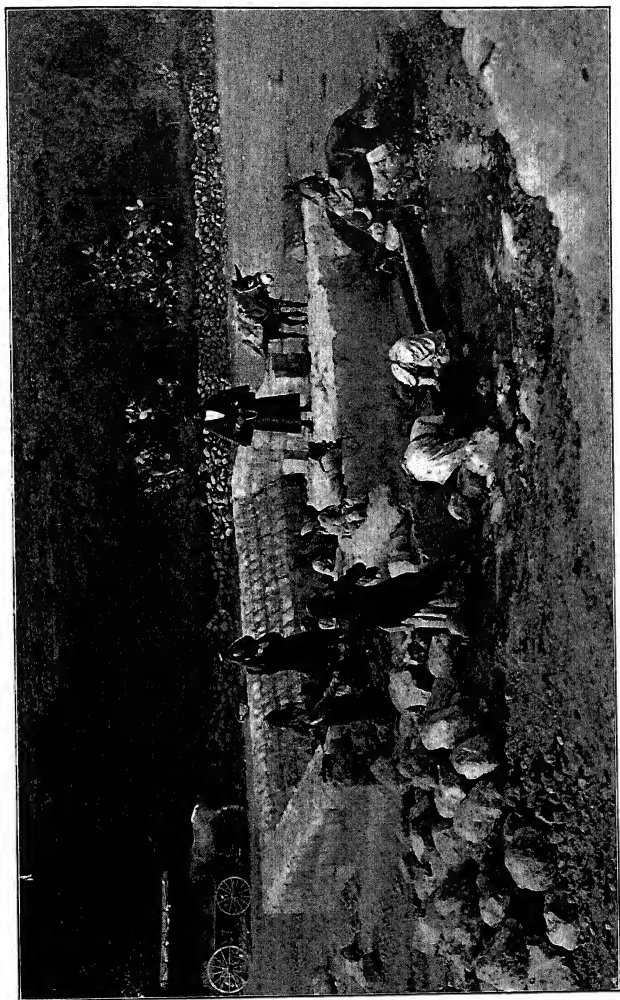
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in Palestine. Here is a road that the Saviour must have travelled many times, and the panorama of rocky hill, fertile valley, orchards of fig and olive, pomegranate and mulberry bushes is one that must have remained practically unchanged. And it is enticingly beautiful, this slide along rocky roads to the ancient city of palaces built by the Tetrarch of Galilee and named in compliment to the Roman Emperor, thus hoping to attract his favour. It is easy to see how the earliest men of the region drifted along the downward pathway and finally decided to build their homes in the valley beside the transparent waters, the slopes of which were doubtless heavily wooded in the time of Christ. Here in the midst of a region deprived of water was a never failing pool of it miles in length and width—and water means something to one who comes to Palestine even now that it has never meant before. The shores of Galilee and its surrounding hills seem to have been the natural home for luxury and the enjoyment of wealth. And there are plenty of evidences that as yet the world does not fully realize the extent of the population that dwelt in the region in an earlier day.

One of the first places visited after crossing into the valley beyond Nazareth and climbing

the hill that erases it from sight is the little town where Jesus performed the miracle of turning water into wine for a wedding celebration, and at the present said to be the home of about one thousand inhabitants. But the traveler would naturally suspect that about nine hundred of this thousand were away from home on the day of His visit, for it is a squalid little village of mud houses, where the people sit in the low arches made to resemble doors, more primitive than the home of tepee Indians, and either gaze or snarl at passers by on the road. But they send their children into the street and they are easily the most pestiferous beggars in all of Palestine. These children, many of whom offer little earthenware jugs for sale, cling to the wheels of wagons, beseech and petition, and even run along for miles into the country beyond, until one is tempted to throw them a few coppers to be rid of them and also reward their exertion in a country where there seems to be none.

A couple of villages dispute the honour of being the Cana of the Bible, but so close is their proximity one to the other, although they have different names in Arabic, it makes little difference, and one can barely visit Kafr Kenna without also seeing Khurbet Kana. But the



WELL AT CANA, WHENCE CAME THE WATER FOR CHRIST'S FIRST MIRACLE.





Greek Church is very positive about the location, and has a church erected over the "exact spot" where the miracle was performed. Where there is a lively controversy among the archæologists and historians in regard to a holy location trust to the Greek Church to settle it. The church merely builds a chapel or convent, says to their thousands of pilgrims "it is here," and in many instances the spot thus selected seems to become the "fully authenticated" one of later generations, as, for example, seems to be the case at the "exact spot" where Jesus was baptized in Jordan.

I went to this Greek church, and, after entering the big walled enclosure of the approach to it, was greeted by a smiling old priest with a group of his fellow townsmen. They were sitting there smoking and chatting, but apparently rather welcomed the intrusion of a stranger, for the men of the congregation walked along after us as the veteran father showed me the "sights" and talked about "there is no question that this is the exact locality"—although it was a story that all of them must have heard many times. I was willing to accept the priest's zeal in the matter, however, and was much pleased by his hospitable interest in me; but when he led me to a little niche in the wall of the church and

pointed to a big earthen jar that would hold perhaps seven or eight gallons and quietly assured me that this was the actual jar that held the water and wine at the wedding feast when Jesus and His Mother were guests, I was obliged to admit my doubts in regard to its authenticity, whereupon he immediately lost interest in me and assured me that I had seen everything.

The traveller from Nazareth to Tiberias passes around the base of Mount Tabor, where is popularly supposed to have taken place the transfiguration of Jesus Christ in the presence of Peter, James and John. The location of the mountain almost exactly conforms to the scriptural account, and down through the centuries it has been accepted as a sacred hill on that account. Many churches have been erected upon its slopes, but most of them have crumbled. There are monasteries, however, which receive pilgrims and guests, some of whom come for an extended stay. In fact, the slopes of Tabor are the most popular burying grounds in the world, and many people, thinking death to be approaching, actually have come here and lived at the monasteries until death overtook them, that they might be buried in its ground. It is estimated that fully fifty thousand people are there interred, although it is impossible to tell any-

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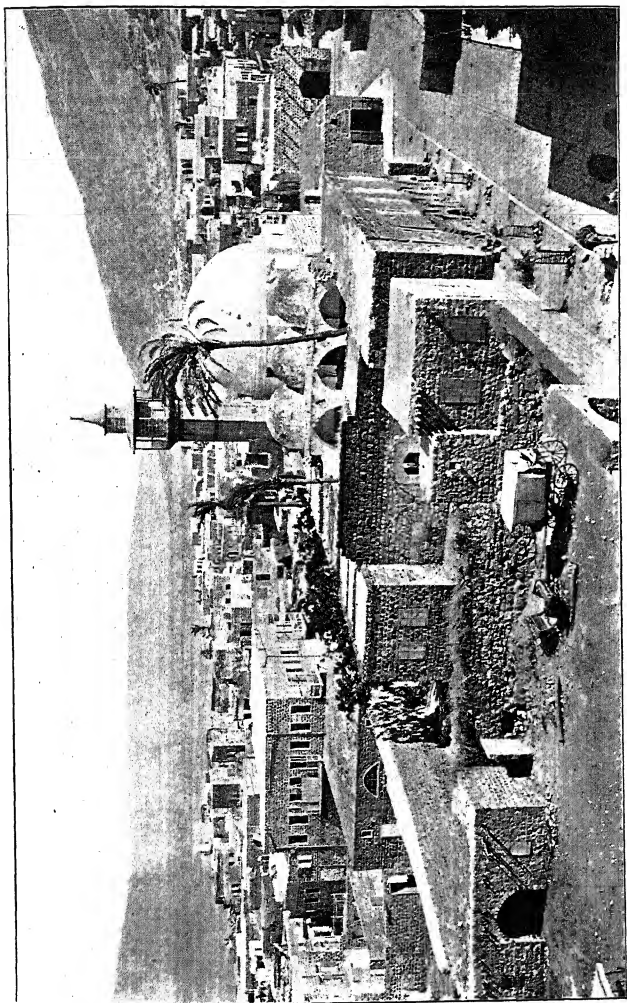
thing like the exact number. A little way down the hill is a spring, which, owing to its location, is generally accepted as the source of the water supply at the time of the wedding feast at Cana.

As we arrived, several shepherd boys were watering their flocks of goats, and, as we halted, a Greek priest came down the road and we invited him to pose for our cameras beside the fountain. He seemed to be flattered by the request and struck such an affected attitude that the photographer was obliged to engage him in conversation for a few moments to bring him "back to life" and not make the photograph appear as if a dummy had posed for it. "Will you send me my photograph?" he asked, after the camera had clicked, and as we assured him that we would, he wrote down his name and address, and is doubtless anxiously awaiting the development of the negatives to see exactly how he looks. A troupe of picturesquely clad girls came up with goatskins and as they were filling them with water he spoke to them, then turned to us, wished us "bon voyage" and was on his way.

"That building on top of the hill is where Jonah was born and where he was buried," said our dragoman, as we rolled along and soon ap-

proached a corkscrew incline. We could see the waters of Galilee beneath us in the distance, but we could not see Tiberias, which we knew lay off there somewhere in the valley, and from pictures we had seen we peered ahead for white minarets and towers, white domes and white buildings beside the blue waters; but Tiberias lies hidden beyond the hill and does not come into sight until one is fairly upon it. The road zigzags down the steep hill and Tiberias looks like a sparkling white jewel in an attractive setting, because much of the ancient wall remains, and there has been little incentive to build much beyond the walls. It looks elegant and beautiful, but small, yet as it is approached nearer and nearer the location of its streets is made, and soon one realizes that, after all, it is a city of some size, just as it is a city of tremendous history.

Soon the wagon rolled along within the gateway of the ancient walls. We were in Tiberias, the capital of Herod Antipas, upon which he lavished so much money and labour, although apparently he blundered somewhat in the exact location, because it was built upon the site of an ancient cemetery and was therefore unclean to Jewish people, who declined to live in the metropolis. In fact it seems doubtful if Christ



TIBERIAS.



ever actually entered the city of Tiberias, although He was long a resident of the shores of the little lake upon which it is located, and there preached and taught in the synagogues of other cities. Tiberias was at the height of its glory during the life of Christ, and it would have been natural for Him to go to the principal city in the neighbourhood, but He frequently showed His sympathy for ancient law, in fact admitted that He came not to destroy the law but to fulfil it, so it is likely that He and His disciples abstained from visiting an "unclean city."

And Tiberias must have been "unclean" from many other viewpoints. When Herod realized his failure with the Jews he decided to people his capital at any cost, so he sent out agents who offered inducements to all the freebooters and adventurers from all the lands on earth. People who were homeless were received here and homes provided for them. Even escaped slaves were promised protection if they reached the city walls. Herod was filling his capital, and he did not intend to let anything interfere with his ambition to make it a little Rome. He built a theatre, a stadium where the youth of the city might engage in athletic games; a forum, a special mint, and he uniformed a special gar-

ri-son like the Roman legions. Statues of famous Romans were scattered about the streets, and Roman vice naturally followed this effort to imitate everything in the Imperial government. Tiberias soon became a city of sin that gave it a worldwide celebrity. Near by it were the hot baths which Herod had fitted up in imitation of similar resorts around Rome. People made the baths an excuse to come to Tiberias for a season for their health, but, instead of gaining in health, indulged in pleasure and vice, thus proving that the hoax of going to a watering-place for one's health was of ancient origin and practice.

Thus Tiberias became a double abomination to the Jews, and yet it is remarkable that the sentiment in regard to the city changed, and after the destruction of Jerusalem it became the chief city of the Jewish nation, despite the Mosaic prohibition against it. Herod became disturbed by the reports that reached him concerning this new prophet who had arisen in Nazareth and who was residing along the shore of the lake. He sent Jesus an invitation to visit him at his capital, in his "golden house," no doubt so named because its roof was covered with sheet lead and gilded; but the Saviour departed in a boat—doubtless beyond the juris-



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diction of the Tetrarch, for the fate of John the Baptist must have been still in His mind and His time had not yet come.

But in reality the first thing I observed in Tiberias was not a ruin of a palace, not the minarets or domes or the very Oriental costumes of the people. As I stood for a moment in front of the little hotel for the purpose of forming a first impression, a middle-aged man came along the street, screeching something at the top of his voice. He went along to the next street corner and screeched the same thing—and continued to do so as far as I could see and hear him. I inquired of the dragoman what he was crying. “He says that hereafter the people of Tiberias will not be allowed to bathe in the sea unless they wear bathing-suits. If they persist in the habit they will be fined.”

A man across the street opened an upper window of his house and shouted something at the town crier. “He says ‘then let the government furnish us bathing-suits if it is so particular,’ ” said the dragoman. And in the days that followed it was quite apparent to one who walked along the shore of the lake that the crier’s admonition about the new law fell upon deaf ears.

There is a blistering sun that shines over the

Sea of Galilee when noonday is approaching on a summer day, so one who enjoys himself beside or upon its waters must either rise early in the morning or come to the beach after the sun has begun to sink beyond the high western hills, which act as a natural curtain. And, by a strange freak, the little lake is usually calm and behaves itself as a little lake should in the early hours of the morning; but often before noon its waves bluster around and roll in imitation of those upon a larger body of water, making a boat trip anything but enjoyable, for the craft that float on Galilee seem to sit atop the waves like a cork. The sails and oars, the latter made of long round sticks, are primitive and not calculated to increase the speed of a boat caught in a storm. Often the boats have a difficult time reaching land. Yet at the same time not a breeze will be stirring upon the shore, there will not be a cloud in the azure sky and nothing above the water to indicate that a storm is in progress. It is likely that these storms are due to volcanic influences. Earthquakes have been frequent in the district, and have laid low the stately structures of an earlier period that formerly lined the banks of the lake. Hot springs still gurggle near the shore and pour their sulphurous water into the lake, proving





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that the great fire monster in the earth is not yet asleep. But one would need no further evidence of volcanic action than the sea itself. Look over its surface at ten o'clock in the morning and it may be smooth as glass and as blue as sapphire; look again five minutes later and you see the water beginning to roll into waves, as if it were being stirred by a gigantic spoon in its depths.

But even this phenomenon is interesting to the traveller and pilgrim—who observes it from the shore of the sea. It was upon this sea that Jesus walked. It was here that He calmed the tempest. Here He said to the waves, "Peace, be still." Along the shores of this pretty body of water, which doubtless became calm or tempestuous in a moment in His day, as it does to-day, Jesus lived and taught for several years. From among its fishermen He selected His disciples and the people who dwelt beside the lake were among the first to hear His voice and know His teachings. There is nothing to show in which city He resided, but the whole shore of the lake is not extensive. At least He taught in a synagogue at Capernaum. At least out there in the distance from Tiberias lies the village from which came Mary of Magdala. It is positive that Jesus moved up and down the coast line, and He

doubtless crossed from one side of the lake to the other. Here should be to the Christian one of the most holy places in all Palestine, for here Christ spent so much of His life; but there is little about the region to commemorate that momentous event in Galilean history. The world and the Christian church prefer Jerusalem, Bethlehem and Nazareth. Jordan and the Sea of Galilee are practically unmarked.

Early one morning I started out for a stroll along the seashore—which seems to be a misnomer, because the Sea of Galilee is but a big pond, when compared to the other “seas” of the world, and even to what we call a lake in America—and first of all visited the ancient road that leads to the sulphur baths. One of them has a temperature of one hundred and forty-three degrees, and it is impossible to remain in the water for any length of time without becoming parboiled. And this spring has been flowing its hot water into the lake since before the Christian era. Perhaps it was one of the things that prompted Herod Antipas to locate his capital where Tiberias now stands. He was always searching for health and long life. He built magnificent buildings above the spring and there were steam parlours into which the fumes from the spring arose. It is even claimed that

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a distant cave, which receives some of the fumes, was a luxurious parlour in the days of Herod, where Roman society disported itself, hoping that the vapours would make them beautiful, strong and healthy.

And present day Tiberias seems to think the same thing. Without a doubt the water is good for rheumatism, and many people from all parts of Palestine still spend an annual holiday here taking the ancient "cure." Special days are set apart for bathing by different nationalities and religions. For example, Jews do not bathe on the same day with Christians, and Mohammedans do not bathe when either of the former have "contaminated" the waters. It is rather amusing to sit in the sand and see them coming along the beach with their towels. To-day all who pass are Jews—and many authorities claim that the most ancient Jewish families in the world reside at Tiberias—and to-morrow the promenade will be given over entirely to fezzed gentlemen, while the next day one may find only "Christians," a rather general title in Palestine, which seems to include every one who is neither a Mohammedan nor a Jew.

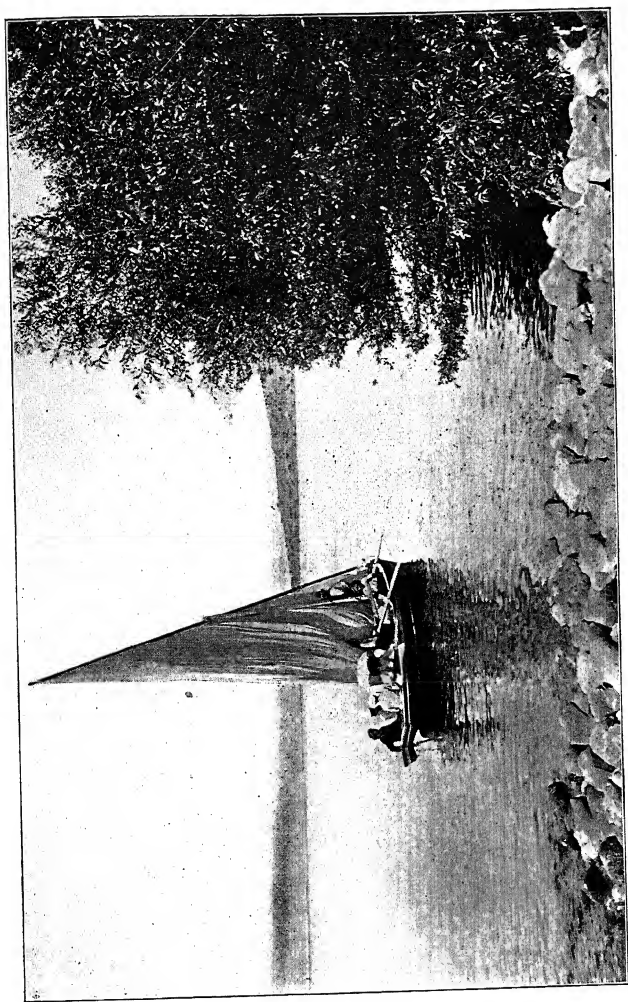
I called to some boatmen to let me ride with them. As it happened, they were merely rowing along the shore for their own amusement in

the morning calm and seemed glad of the commission which I gave them to take me down the lake as far as Capernaum. It was a funny little boat, which seemed to sit on top of the water and slide along rapidly, as four of the boys rowed and sang. There was one song that seemed to be their favourite, for they warbled it over and over again, one younger man than the others intoning a line in a hoarse falsetto, after which the others repeated it two or three times. Unlike the Egyptian and Nubian boatmen, they did not seem to be singing to make their work easier. They were singing of love, always of love.

“What else is of any consequence in the world?” one of them asked when, through an interpreter at Capernaum, the words of the song were interpreted for me and I smiled. They were something as follows:

“My eyes, oh my eyes!  
They see a lady coming over the mountain,  
How fine she looks!  
It is better to be married.  
For life is short.  
There she lives between the moon and stars,  
And I go around so lonely!  
And now that I see her,  
She loves another.  
Oh, to love a moongirl  
And know that she loves some one else!”





OLEANDERS ON THE SHORE OF THE SEA OF GALILEE.



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It was a beautiful cruise which the Galilean fishermen and I had just after dawn that June morning. They were poetically-minded chaps, those Orientals. When I remarked the beauty of the great oleander trees and shrubs that were everywhere along the edge of the lake, sometimes bending their branches of pink clusters into the blue of the water, they steered the boat close to the rocks, cut off big sprays of bloom and decorated the bow of the boat, seeming to enjoy the flowers just as much as if they were unused to seeing them. One of them composed a little song, or at least improvised some words which he intoned, about the beauty of the oleander, and, as was their custom in other songs, they repeated the words after he had completed a line. They sang and rowed until a breeze came up, just enough breeze to carry the boat along toward Capernaum.

When we arrived at the site of the ancient city we were met at the stone steps, which come down into the water, by a Franciscan monk, who lives there alone. The Franciscans own the property, which he said they had considerable difficulty in purchasing, and now that they have found it to be assuredly the site, the Turkish government will not let them restore ancient buildings which they have unearthed until

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they have made a "gift," and the monk said that they have not funds enough for "bak-sheesh" and restoration, so they are waiting.

He lives here alone, the monk told us, because most of his brothers find it too hot to be tolerable, while he enjoys it. They come to him for short periods, but they go away to the other monasteries of the order. He alone directs the native labourers who are digging in the sand and debris. He has uncovered the ancient synagogue, certainly the one in which Jesus taught, and he has had the big stones and pillars set around in order so that they might be put back into their original positions with comparatively little expense and time. It is to this monk a labour of love and his life's work. If the complete restoration does not take place within his lifetime, then some one else will take up the work. He is happy that he is able to do what he is doing and yet he must be lonesome in his hermit retreat, where he lives in a little "house" made of four piles of stones over which poles form a roof. He lives on lentils and other vegetables and goes forth each morning either to decipher inscriptions or to direct the work of native labourers who assist him in excavating.

The monk, who speaks several languages, including perfect English, went over the ruins

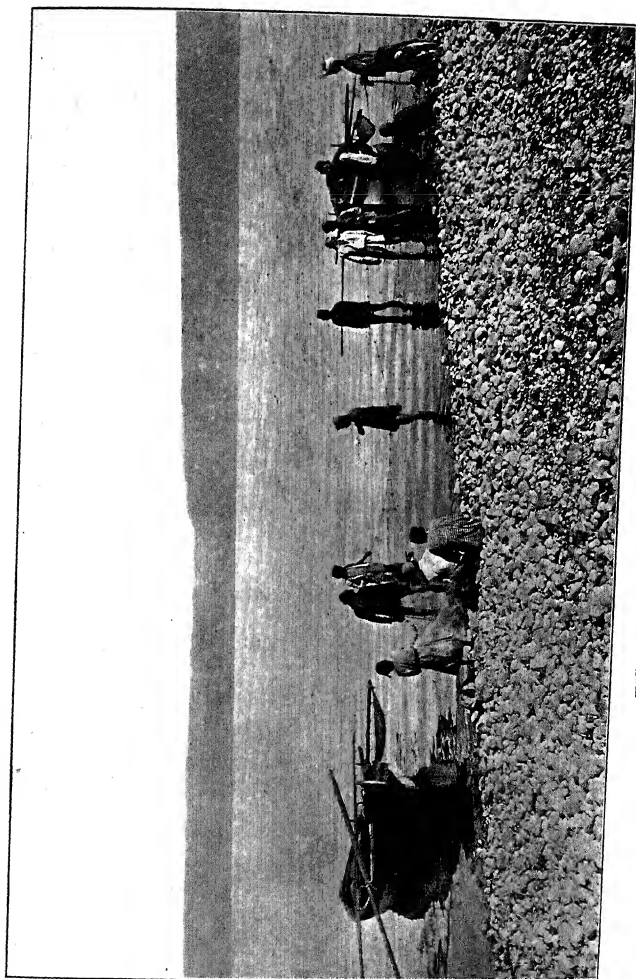
with me and showed a rare archæological knowledge. He could interpret the symbolical carvings on every stone, even those marks left by the Roman workmen who no doubt built the synagogue for the Jews. In fact, the entire city of Capernaum is comparatively clear to his eyes. He knows where the walk led to this and that building, because he has dug and traced pathways. He has found little fountain basins, judgment courts, stone divans that were scattered along the streets, and all manner of imperishable objects connected with the early life of the city, which was destroyed by earthquake.

Christ said: "It had been more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for Capernaum"—and the prophecy has been fulfilled. Not one stone seems to rest upon the stone where it was placed by the builders. Capernaum is a heap of rubbish and carved stones, with only the little abode of the Franciscan monk upon the hill, with its little garden. Everything else is desolation. The monk picked some branches of acacia and placed them at the bow of our boat with the oleanders, as the boys poled off shore and we went along to Tell Hum, a pile of rubbish, which marks the site of a beautiful marble structure where Jesus is sup-

posed to have said: "I am the Bread of Life," as recorded in the sixth chapter of St. John. Then we went to Kejdel, the ancient Magdala, home of Mary, the Magdalene. It is now a mud and rocky stone village, inhabited by peasants, who are not too favourably inclined toward strangers with cameras. Here it was that Mary once lived in sin and luxury, the woman whose life has so many writers, painters and sculptors.

Josephus, who governed the province thirty years after the crucifixion, says there were nine important cities on the Sea of Galilee, but they have passed away, with the exception of Tiberias. It is even impossible to locate their sites, although the beach of the lake is everywhere strewn with beautifully carved capstones and polished pillars. Sometimes the peasants use red marble or blue granite pillars for the steps to their mud cabins. I saw one man rolling his little field of stone and dry dirt with a beautiful pillar that probably once adorned the porch of a palace or helped to support the roof of a temple. The former grandeur of the banks of Galilee meant nothing to him. Life was too hard in these days. It was too difficult to get food for his wife and children. Poetry and romance had fled.

As we approached the little stone pier of the



FISHERMEN ON THE SEA OF GALILEE.





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city we could see the fishermen with their nets drying on the sand. The men were pulling and mending them—as they have done for two thousand years. And they were singing as they worked. Near the pier is St. Peter's Church. Tradition says that St. Peter started out from here when he made his attempt to walk on the water. A Franciscan brother was sitting in the shade near the quay, as I landed, and kindly offered to show me around the church.

One morning I crossed the Sea of Galilee, and after passing beyond the hilltop, which in reality forms the east bank of the lake, found myself in the desert, a parched and dry country that looked as if rain had never fallen upon it. I had passed through beautiful orange groves, which had the added interest of granite or marble columns scattered about, conveying absolute proof of one of those cities that flourished on Galilean shores in the time of Josephus.

But to-day I was not looking for ruins, nor perhaps for one of those spots that make a sentimental or religious appeal to the stranger. I had another objective point, nothing more than to visit a desert market, the bartering-place where the sons of the sands come to trade. There was an enclosure, at least a large open field was fenced off, and it was a busy scene at

the time of my arrival, although I was early. After explaining my mission to a man who evidently served as a guard, he placed a stone near the entrance, where I might conveniently observe the arrivals, among whom were a strange collection of human beings. Here, at last, were plenty of men and women from "beyond Jordan," which seems to be a marked distinction even in the minds of the natives elsewhere in Palestine.

The guard bravely undertook to explain everything and everybody, but unfortunately his knowledge of English equalled my facility with Arabic, so he finally gave it up after a while and merely grinned and gestured when attracting my attention to something or other which he considered of especial interest. The guard was much embarrassed apparently, because some little ragamuffins from the desert wound some rags around their feet and legs, in imitation of the riding boots that I was wearing; and when they paraded along in front of me for my inspection and the pleasure of onlookers, he threw his club at them. But, unfortunately, he made a bad aim and was obliged to go for some distance to pick up his wand of office as a reward for his temper. Probably he "apologized for the insult," for he did a good deal of chatter-

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ing, showing that he felt a good deal worse about it than I did.

Almost all of the merchants and traders who did not come afoot came on camels. There were several of them who had at least ten big "ships of the desert" following them, all of which were laden with great, bulky bundles that must have taxed their strength. It costs about five cents to bring a camel into the market. Each donkey costs one-half of that amount, while it costs about one-fourth of that amount to "enter" a goat or cow. The first long camel train that arrived was laden with fibre. The animals stalked along to a corner of the enclosure, as much at home as a horse in his own stall, and of their own free will knelt down, soon after which the big bales were unfastened and rolled around in piles. The merchant was getting his stock in order. And this seemed to be quite the usual operation with all who came early.

Men arrived with great bundles three times the size of the animals on donkey-back. On top of each bundle was a long pole, which with two cross bars were set up in an umbrella-shaped protection from the scorching sun. Under these "tents," the merchant neatly arranged his stock for inspection, or if not always "neatly," he seemed to be trying to place things where

they would attract the most attention. Men with great bulky bolts of camel's hair cloth as coarse as a rag carpet, and other bolts of giddily hued calico, spread their wares out on the sand and opened what corresponded to dry goods stores. Camels came with great sacks of sand beans and lentils, which were dumped into piles on the yellow sand. Many of the purchasers, I observed afterward, seemed to be getting more sand and dirt than beans and lentils, but the big wooden or hide measures were filled and the buyers seemed to be satisfied.

I was amused when the desert druggist set up his stall. He had little earthen pots of many sorts of leaves, all kinds of dyes for painting fingernails and lips, also khol for the eyes, and stacks of what seemed to be Iceland moss, which he sold in large quantities. The "carpet" dealers had large and small mats made of palm leaves. I passed what was apparently a meat market. A woman was standing beside a pile of entrails of sheep. She was doing a lively cash business, and when trade grew slack she snatched up a tambourine, beat it wildly and emitted weird vocal sounds which she no doubt considered singing—thus bringing back the crowd. Near her was another woman who had about two dozen hen's eggs for her stock. They

looked as old as the monuments of Egypt and apparently didn't make much of an impression upon the "trade," for after several men had jabbered with her a long time, and held them, the poor woman grabbed one and broke it to show them what she said was true. They were "strictly fresh." But she picked the wrong one for her demonstration. It was dry and hard inside, and the crowd left her as she looked back at her stock and quite unabashed began to rearrange the other eggs on a straw hamper.

Perhaps the most interesting part of the market were the transactions in which no money passed at all. A black fellow from the desert would take a goat, lead a cow, or carry a bale of fibre and go to the stall where things were offered that he wanted to buy. He would offer his goat for so many beans and lentils. Then what seemed to be a quarrel, but what was probably Oriental bargaining, would begin; and in the end, as likely as not, the goat would be left with the bean merchant who, in turn, would take a sack of beans to the seller of woven mats and carry on his "business" in the same way.

All around the enclosure, at irregular intervals, men came and squatted before little heaps of stones that seemed to have been left there from other market days, and upon these they

soon lighted little fires of charcoal and began to heat Turkish coffee, which they sold for a little more than a cent a cup. In a place like this, anything cool would have seemed preferable, from our point of view, but not so with these desert men who, like Eastern city folk, sip this very hot coffee and seem to be refreshed by it, although it seems to be like adding fuel to the flames to an American. Most of the "merchants," after they had arranged their stocks for the day, sought one of these coffee "stands" and enjoyed a demi-tasse, a handful of dry beans, or pieces of black bread soaked in water, so that they could get their teeth through it, as a sort of breakfast and preparation for the day's work.

By eight o'clock the big enclosure was crowded with people. One would not imagine that so many people lived in such a barren land, where the sun scorches and burns, and where human beings, goats, camels and donkeys are about all that can live. I saw a few gourd-like melons offered for sale, and a few cucumbers and radishes, the latter with foot-long tops, which were eaten with a relish, but there were few vegetables, and it was apparent that these were considered luxuries. But it seems strange that these men who live on dry beans and coffee

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and large quantities of salt are healthy specimens. I do not recall having seen a hungry-looking individual in all the strange clan at the market. And they all seemed to be happy. They smiled as they chatted, unless the bargaining became too spirited, and they sat back among their goods and smoked until they seemed to be half asleep.

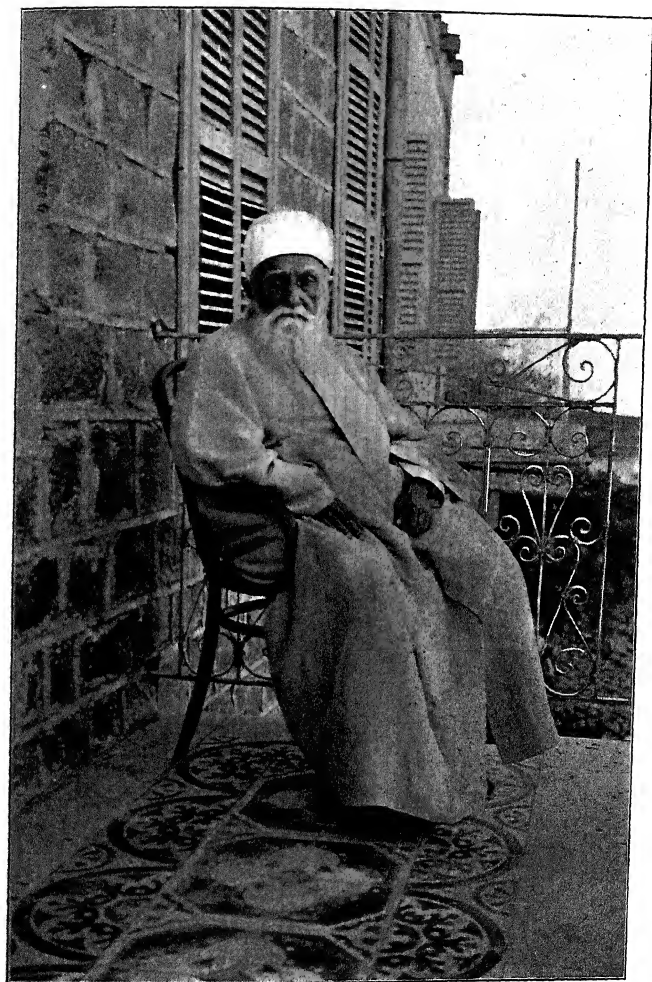
Unlike our markets at home everything was finished before noon, and the place was practically deserted before the hottest time of the day. As quickly as men finished their trading, and obtained what they wanted for what they brought with them, they pulled down the canopies, mounted their camels or donkeys and departed for their far-away homes out beyond the range of hills. But the exchange of goods was so lively during the few hours of trading that men who had brought palm fibre went home driving flocks of goats, and men who had brought goats took away beans. Only the sellers of coffee seemed to take away what they brought with them—the utensils of their trade. And the coffee-men went with real money in their long white cotton purses. In some ways they seemed to be the most fortunate of all the different “merchants.”

## CHAPTER XVIII

### MEETING A PROPHET

ONE morning as I was walking along the beach of the Sea of Galilee, just beyond Tiberias, thinking of the important events in history that had transpired on those sands, and of the fishermen who had been called from their nets to carry a new gospel to the world about two thousand years ago, I met a man whose appearance was more striking than any man I have ever seen in my life. He was a comparatively short old gentleman with long white beard. He wore a long white robe that reached to his ankles and a white turban covered the top of his head. Doubtless I stared at him in amazement; he was so different from any human being I had ever seen. He was walking slowly, his head slightly bowed, and evidently in deep thought. But he looked up, saw me looking at him, and then raised his hand to his forehead in Oriental salutation as he passed. I was alone, and, believing him to be some personage of Tiberias, I admit walking slowly be-





ABBAS EFFENDI (ABDUL BAHÁ).



hind him until we reached the city, and, as I conveniently met a dragoman, I inquired as to the identity of the old gentleman who attracted me.

“That’s Abbas Effendi,” he replied, “Abdul Baha.”

Here then, on the sands of Galilee, I had come face to face with the Persian prophet, one who during his lifetime has millions of zealous followers, and one whom his followers believe has fully as much scriptural prophecy to fortify his claims to leadership among men as did the Man of Nazareth. Like Jesus Christ, he has been persecuted and has suffered on account of his preaching. Like Jesus Christ, he had come to the Sea of Galilee to walk up and down its holy shores, preaching and teaching his disciples, who follow him as he walks and talks. Already much myth and legend is springing up around him, for he is the holiest man of the East, despised by many, cursed by the fanatical followers of other religions, and loved by believers in him with a love that becomes devotion itself.

Abbas Effendi, as he is known in the East, or Abdul Baha, as he is better known in America, is the recognized head of the Bahai Movement, as he said he preferred to have his religion called, although it may be more familiar in some quarters when spoken of as the cult of

the Babists. He is a person of tremendous magnetism. One "feels" him when in his presence. Irrespective of his religious teachings, the wise men of the earth, who have met him, have considered him one of the wisest who lives. And he has met the distinguished men of all nations. They have visited him in his prison home at Acre, as they visited Tolstoi at his farm in Russia. Men like William J. Bryan have made it a part of their pilgrimage of Palestine to call upon him and pay their respects. Wise doctors from Europe have called upon him to discuss philosophy, as it is taught in the East, and they have found that he has absorbed all the philosophies of the European continent, knows practically all about all the religions of the world, and is able to discuss each with its leaders, while to every one who meets him he speaks, not of the error of other men's ways, but graphically and poignantly explains to every man how his religion is but a part of that great universal religion which he himself preaches and believes is soon to cover the world.

But the dragoman who disclosed the interesting identity admitted that he was powerless when I told him that I desired to be presented, owing to the fact that Abbas Effendi speaks only the Persian language. Then, unwilling to let

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what I considered an opportunity to pass, I addressed one of his followers in English, and as chance would have it, I spoke to his interpreter, a Persian gentleman who had been for ten years attached to the Persian legation at Washington. Certainly he would present me. There was no hesitation as he quickly took me to the side of his master, bowed profoundly and introduced me. The old man held out his hand and touched mine. "I am pleased," he said, "very pleased to meet one from far away America. I am very glad that you have come to these foreign countries to learn and observe, that you may go back to your own country knowing more of the world than you could know if you remained in one country. I am glad that I have met you in this hallowed and beautiful place, the Sea of Galilee's shores. I trust that your visit here will be pleasant, and that you will continue your journey and return to your home in safety."

There seemed to be finality to his words. It seemed that my "interview," which I craved, was over, for the old man started along, after raising his hand to his forehead as a sign of farewell. So I pressed the interpreter to request another interview for me, at a more convenient time, perhaps, when I could talk to the wise man and learn something of his teachings.

“Abbas Effendi will be pleased if you will call upon him at his home up there at three o’clock this afternoon,” said the interpreter, as he pointed to a little white house near the lake, with an overhanging balcony that had a view over the whole extent of the sea. Thus ended my first meeting. Fortunately for me there were three others. Together we walked slowly along the sands and together we sat on his little balcony near sunset and I heard of that great new religion which is to reconcile the whole world. He told me of his millions of followers in Persia (the English officials fifteen years ago estimated the number as between three and four millions in Persia alone) and he told me of the thousands who are flocking to his banner in India, but he seemed to me even more interested in his message to Europe and America. “Particularly America,” he said, “for there is the new country, one that is not weighed down by superstitions and prejudices which are so difficult to overcome. America is a receptive country, capable of seeing and hearing and believing.”

And while Abbas Effendi, himself, did not care to give any figures, because he said that there was no way of knowing the exact truth, his interpreter told me that they were of the opinion

that there were about fifty thousand converts to the Bahai Movement in America, their strongholds being in Chicago, Boston and Washington. At Chicago he had heard the Bahais had purchased a large tract of land just outside of the city and would soon erect a church. In Europe many churches had been built, and Abbas Effendi was recently pleased to learn that in the Caucasus a million-dollar structure had been completed by his people, and had naturally become the finest structure devoted to the cult in the world, because in Persia, where numbers are greater, the people are poor and up until this time are obliged to meet in central halls and rooms.

It was not known at the time of his birth that Abbas Effendi would be the leader of the Bahais, nor was it known at the time of his birth that his father, Baha O'llah, would be later hailed as the Light of the World, but, strangely enough, Abbas Effendi was born in the year that the Bab, or Herald of the new religion, appeared in Persia and proclaimed his message to the world. As usual in such cases considerable misinformation has circulated around the world in regard to Bahaism, its founder, Baha O'llah, and his son, Abbas Effendi, and their relative positions in the religion, so I questioned Abdul Baha

carefully in the matter during our walks and talks and learned from the best source of all just exactly what is believed in regard to the Bab, from whom the cult takes its name. And, strangely enough, as it seemed to me, I was told that the Bab did not claim to have founded the religion, although he suffered martyrdom for his declarations, and is held in holy esteem by all believers, but merely announced that he was the "gate," which is the translation of "Bab," a sort of John the Baptist, who proclaimed to the world that the "One whom God would manifest," etc., was at that time upon the earth, but unknown. The Bab said that the coming Great One would in time announce himself to the world, and he believed that the Christ would declare His mission in not more than nineteen years.

The Bab was hanged and shot. The father of Abbas Effendi—the "Great One," as he is known—never saw him, and perhaps knew little concerning him. But in nineteen years he called his family together, when they were upon a journey, and announced who he was. Soon afterward he was sent into exile and there remained the rest of his life. But, before he died, this man who is known as Baha O'llah (Light of God), called his son to him, stretched forth his



hands and declared that Abbas Effendi should be considered the Servant of God, indeed one with himself. To his followers he quoted: "I will make him, my first born, greater than the kings of the earth," using the Hebrew Bible, strangely enough, because he thought no more of it than of the words of Buddha, the creed of the Zoroastrians, of the words of Mahomet and Jesus Christ. Thus Abbas Effendi, unsuspecting that such was to be the case, became the head of the movement, and he has been considered so until this day. He has been freed by the Young Turks after having been held as a political prisoner for forty years. He was particularly despised by Abdul Hamid; but, now that the Sultan has found his reward, Abbas Effendi may go where he pleases. Thus I found him on the shores of the Sea of Galilee, where he believes that he is completing his mission, and where, owing to his years, he must soon end his earthly life.

Before I saw Abbas Effendi the second time I had quite a lengthy interview with his secretary and close friend, Mirza Ahmad Sohrab, the brilliant young Persian who is devoted to the head of the Bahaists and spends his entire life in his company. He admitted to me that a close record is being kept of everything of im-

portance that is uttered by the "Renovator of the Worlds," as he is known to his followers. Abbas Effendi has written much, but it is not from his writings so much as from what he says that his disciples gain that faith which is prompting them to undergo persecutions and sufferings for the sake of the new movement.

Abbas Effendi is a dynamo of energy. He was born in 1844, and is therefore an old man. His life as a prisoner might have left him a physical wreck, but instead of that he seems to have undergone an almost superhuman recuperation. He rises early in the morning, receives visitors of all nationalities and creeds during the day, often attends the services of the Jews in the synagogues, goes to prayer with the Moslems in their mosques, and attends Christian churches. He carries on a correspondence with his followers in all parts of the world, and directs any number of momentous affairs; but his secretary tells me that after the affairs of his busy day are over he will often call him, assure him that he is not weary, and will either read, dictate or talk until far into the hours of the night. He knows not fatigue, but attendance upon him often wearies the younger men, who carefully record his sayings and habits, day and night.

The first time I called upon him in his temporary home, overlooking the Sea of Galilee, he arose to greet me, and then motioned me to be seated as he called to a servant to bring me a glass of tea. "Perhaps you do not like tea," he said, "but this is Persian tea and there is a difference. I assure you that this is worth drinking." When I inquired as to his health, he assured me that he had not felt so strong for many years. Instead of undermining his constitution, his long imprisonment at Acre seems to have had the opposite effect. All of the latent energy of his young manhood seems to have been stored up for the present. He said he had no complaints to make. His life had been nothing but one succession of troubles. He had been an exile, as his father had been before him. But he spoke of these things in a soft and gentle voice.

"Why," he asked, "why is it that you come to see me? You say you write for American readers. People of the world care to hear more about the successful and beloved men of the world, so why do you not speak to them? I am an outcast among men, for I have been until now a political prisoner—and I am the son of a prisoner."

But he did not exactly mean what he said,

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because he willingly talked of himself and of his religion, and replied to questions, many of which he must have answered many times. Over and again he said that his was not a new religion. "Bahaism is simply a message," he would repeat, "its prophecies are readily explained by all religions. We strongly forbid all leadership, hence the Bahais remain unorganized and make no proselytes, but teach that each person shall live among his neighbours, until his life tells silently that he is a Bahai."

Briefly summed up, however, and robbed of the beautiful rhetoric in which Abbas Effendi is able to clothe his sentences—I wished afterward that I had received his permission to jot down what he said in shorthand—he is preaching a universal religion which includes about every known creed of the well-known religions. His aim seems to reconcile everything. He preaches equal suffrage for men and women. He would have a universal language, and told me that he believed Esperanto would do, after a few changes had been made in the present system. He has lectured one evening before a meeting of Socialists and agreed with them in many essentials. The next night it happened that he lectured before a large audience in a room next to their cathedral. He agrees with the Moslems,

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and discusses at length with them the teachings of their prophets in whom he believes. He accepts Jesus Christ as the Son of God and an inspired Prophet. He believes in almost everything that is taught by orthodox Jews. He believes that Buddha was an inspired prophet. The same honour is given to Confucius, while he has a strong leaning toward Zoroaster.

Oh, this man can discourse learnedly upon the philosophy of Herbert Spencer, Kant and Schopenhauer. Also he can speak learnedly of those Eastern philosophers of whom we of the West have never even heard the names.

I asked him if he included Christian Science in his apparently all-reaching and all-embracing religion.

"I find gems of truth in what Mrs. Eddy said," he replied, "and these things I include and accept. But there are many exaggerations in what she taught. I say to you, if you have a mental ailment, it can be cured by thought. If you have a physical ailment or a broken bone, I would say to you, 'quickly send for a doctor.' Earthly trouble can be cured only by earthly means and has not to do with God."

"Is the day of miracles over, or will other miracles occur in the future?"

"You mean, I take it, things which we believe

at present to be contrary to natural law?" I replied in the affirmative.

"To that question, I shall only reply, I believe that everything is possible with God at any time."

Then, as if wishing to turn the conversation to other subjects, he said in polite Oriental fashion: "It is beautiful to be young and free, so you may travel around the world and see the beautiful things of the earth."

And I recalled on that last day, when I saw him, that he said the same thing. As I came down to the beach to take a little boat that carried me across the Sea of Galilee where I took a train, he came to bid me farewell and repeated the same words, as he raised his hands in benediction and added: "You will have a safe voyage across the great sea that takes you to your home. It is beautiful to be young and free, to go where you will." And, lifting up his white robe, he turned and walked along the sand, which seems to have a fascination for him, followed by three or four of his disciples.

"There may be a light in a room, but it merely sheds light in that room," he said. "There may be many lights, with coloured bulbs of various hues and shades. But the source of all those lights is the same—and there must be sources; it

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is the dynamo that is hidden from sight. So it is with all the religions. They sparkle here and there in various colours—but there is but one source for them all, just one Light, and that is God. Self-seeking preachers and teachers have wandered far from that Real Light. And it is the Light that we now seek in the real truth. Men have wandered far from the teachings of Christ, Buddha, the Jewish prophets and all of the others. Ours is not a new religion, it is the very old one; we desire to unite all forms in their original purity.”

Then I spoke of his persecutions.

“What is it for one man to suffer?” he asked. “It is as nothing. If one man may enjoy little comfort on earth and at the same time be leading many men to see the Light—ah, that is the thing!”

He said that his religion should have no paid ministers. He teaches, and he expects those whom he teaches to do likewise, without money. They should perform this service in addition to whatever else they do in life.

Mizra Ali Mohmed, who was born in 1819 in a little city in Persia, at the age of twenty-four declared himself to be the “Bab” or door. His first declaration was made before a concourse of one hundred thousand pilgrims in Mecca, and

when he returned to his native home his cause spread so rapidly that he gave great alarm to the officials. But he persistently declared that it was merely through him that the announcement was made to the world that a "Messiah" was already on earth and would manifest himself in nineteen years. The Bab was condemned to death by hanging and shooting. He was hung up with one of his secretaries and soldiers were ordered to fire. The secretary was killed, but a bullet hit the rope by which the Bab was hanging and let the body fall to the earth, whereupon the soldiers, who were Armenians, believed that a miracle had happened and ran away. When the Bab was again arrested he was dictating letters to another secretary, and such was the superstition that it was difficult to obtain soldiers who would again attempt to perform the deed. But he was executed, and his body was removed by stealth from Persia, brought all the way on camel-back and interred on Mount Carmel, where Abbas Effendi has erected a suitable monument and placed the body of his father. He attempted to erect a church over the two graves, but the Turkish government would not permit him to do so.

Mirza Hussian Ali, now known as Bah O'llah, was born in 1817 of a family that belonged to the



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ruling class at Teheran. At the age of twenty-seven he heard of the teachings of the Bab and began to preach his gospel. His property was confiscated and he was thrown into a dungeon, where he remained for four months. But the "cause" continued to spread, and the authorities banished him from Teheran to Bagdad, where great numbers of pilgrims came to hear him. It was while on the trip between the two cities that he called his family to him and announced that he was the promised Messiah and for that he was being persecuted. Abbas Effendi told me feelingly how his father made this announcement to his mother and himself as they were seated in an orchard at their midday meal.

The report spread, and the authorities of Arabia became aroused and had him banished to Constantinople, thinking that his cause would die. Instead, it grew, and spread so rapidly that the Sultan banished him to Acre, the penal colony in Syria. There he died in 1892, after having announced to the world that Abbas Effendi was the Coming One of whom the Bab had prophesied, the one to come in the latter days and establish God's Kingdom on earth. Then the son was thrust into prison and remained in the military barracks for three years with insufficient food. Finally, he was permitted to

live outside the walls, but always under the military guard. Thus he lived for forty years, until he was released by the Young Turks. He went to prison a young man, and he was released an old man. He was thrust into a Turkish jail before he had the rudiments of education, but he came out so learned that the sages of civilized nations were astonished at his grasp of affairs and knowledge of the world and its life, religion, science, history and practical reforms which were needed at once.

He says that many of his followers are yet confined within prison walls and are being persecuted, having only secret communication with the outside world. When a party of Americans visited him in 1900, the Bahai movement began to spread throughout the Western world and it has made rapid strides in that time, although numerically his following is greatest in Persia, where religious beliefs mean more than they do in the West. Several of the government officials have advocated encouraging the movement among the Persians and Indians, as its tendency is to make all classes less fanatical and to bring all religious sects and creeds into a closer fellowship and completely break down caste, which is such an important factor in Oriental life.

And that, in a nutshell, was what I gained

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from my interviews with Abbas Effendi himself. He believes that Christ taught "love thy neighbour as thyself." He believes that Mohammedans, Jews, Buddhists and Zoroastrians were taught the same thing, and that not one of them is doing as they were taught. Thus he would become the great "renovator" or conciliator. He would bring all men together in a spirit of brotherly love—and he would raise the status of women—particularly in the East, so that they might have an equal standing with males. And as Queen Victoria wrote to his father in 1869: "If this is of God, it will stand; and if not, there is no harm done."

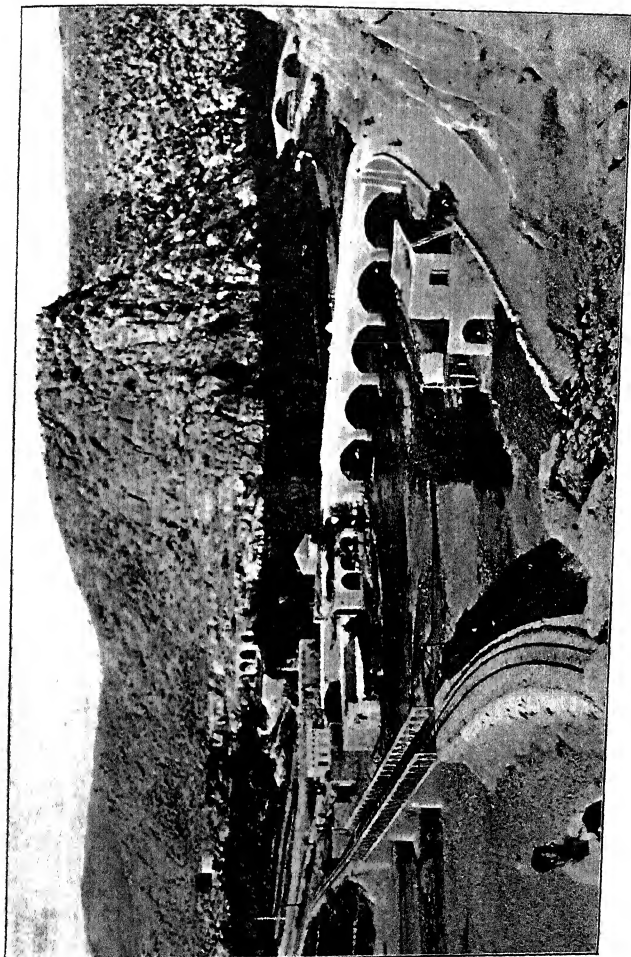
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## CHAPTER XIX

### ANCIENT AND MODERN

**I**F within the brief compass of one day one may find greater contrast than is offered to the traveller who leaves the thriving and most European city of Palestine or Syria, the very modern Beirut, and by train climbs the Lebanon hills and before nightfall finds himself in the ancient metropolis of Baalbek, the fact has not been recorded. After leaving the older cities and sacred landmarks behind, we had been spending several days in the little seaport that tries at least to put on the manners of Cairo, which, in turn, seems to borrow most of its exterior manners from Europe, when one day we started again for the plunge into the interior that was to be the climax of our Holy Land pilgrimage.

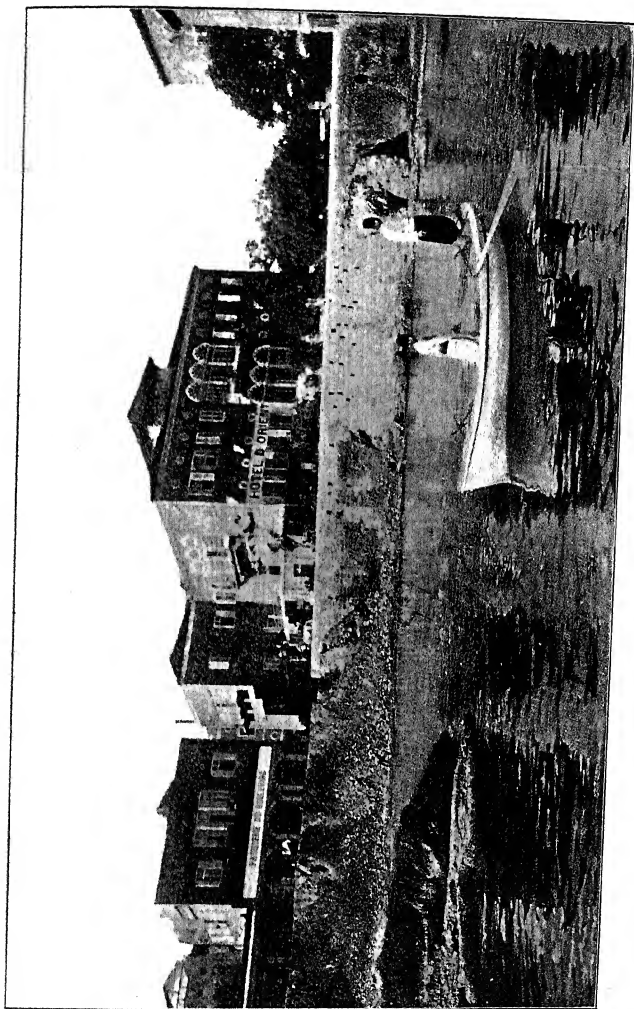
For several days we had felt that while we were in the land where ancient peoples had traversed every foot of ground, where Pharaohs of Egypt and ancient Assyrians had bravely contested the ownership of cities and outlying



DOG RIVER, NEAR BEIRUT.

and quickly deposits its passengers in the shadow of the temple of the sun at Baalbek. And when such a quick transition is possible, one quickly forgets that brief excursion or lapse into the new, preferring the old, for there is much better new elsewhere than at Beirut, and Baalbek's antiquity can be scarcely matched elsewhere on earth.

But the traveller may have several enjoyable days at Beirut. There is a comfortable hotel that sits beside the water-front, and its terrace, although it has never achieved celebrity, is not unlike that at Shepherd's in Cairo. Here also passes a rare kaleidoscope of colour, animate and inanimate, for here come the merchants and traders from the interior, rubbing elbows with the European and Europeanized native, for one soon recognizes a much finer type than he has met within the southern or inland portions of the country. Here, dark-skinned natives, heads bedecked with the inevitable fez, but wearing European evening clothes and eating European food, sit at their clubs on the seafront. They chat and chat and then go home, for although it boasts of its cosmopolitanism, the city offers absolutely no amusement that does not revert back to Oriental type. The purveyors of entertainment must appeal to the crowd, and the



WATERFRONT, BEIRUT.





crowd, while sipping cool drinks, eating ices and perhaps dressing in Western fashion, prefers the squawking of an Oriental fife and tom-toms to the sounds of a European orchestra, or when the latter is offered by an enterprising restaurateur, his patrons request Turkish airs in preference to excerpts from "The Merry Widow" or "The Chocolate Soldier." The stranger, however, finds much pleasure in sauntering in and out of these places. After all, it is when they are relaxing in recreation that one seems to feel and know foreign people best.

There was one man and one institution, however, that attracted our attention long before we reached Beirut. In all parts of the East when we found an official who could speak English, one who seemed just a little more awake to modern realities than his fellowmen, and usually held a position that elevated him even in the eyes of other natives, the inevitable answer to inquiry was to the effect that he had been a student at the American Collège at Beirut. Thus we drove to the American College and asked to see its veteran president, Dr. Nathaniel Bliss, who went to Syria sixty years ago as a missionary and since that time has been devoting his life and energies to the improve-

ment of the youth of Egypt, Arabia and Syria who came to him.

Dr. Bliss is far along in the nineties, a noble figure that has been perpetuated in marble from contributions received from former pupils, many of whom were from poverty-stricken homes, but now hold high positions under the Turkish government in its colonial possessions and in Egypt under the English government. On the morning of my visit to him, he took part in a little drama that showed his characteristics better than some of his larger accomplishments. Three high officials from Constantinople sent in word that they had come to make an inspection of the college for the government. He admitted them at once, fully mindful of the importance attached to such a visit in an Eastern country. The three officials quickly approached the old gentleman, fell on their knees and kissed his white hand which he extended in greeting. The nonagenarian was visibly annoyed and plainly said so.

"But we are your boys," said the spokesman; "you gave us the opportunity to do something for ourselves."

"Perhaps you were my boys, but you are men now, great men of the world, so stand up and be men."

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At the time of my visit there were a thousand boys and young men in the American College at Beirut. There were three hospitals, each full of natives, students of the school and others, including many women. Perhaps the work of Dr. Bliss and its great success is best summed up and explained in his replies to my various questions.

“Sixty years ago I came here as a Christian missionary, but, soon after my arrival, it became plain to me that the people needed something before they needed the preaching of Christianity. I saw, for example, that they needed to heal their bodies before they could take much thought of their souls. I was much criticized at the time—in fact I have been always much criticized for my actions out here by persons who were not well acquainted with local conditions. But I was determined to let the others do the preaching. I resolved to teach and endeavour to let my example be a proof of my faith in Christianity. I got help from America, so that I took sixteen boys into my home and began to teach them. First of all, remember, I had to teach them that cleanliness is a Christian virtue. Then came books, more pupils, and you know the result. To-day our college has an endowment of over a million dollars. It is non-sectarian,

and, strange as it may seem, we make no effort to proselytize. Many of our pupils are Mohammedans when they come to us and they remain Mohammedans when they go out into the world. When any religious 'feeling' crops out, I have said: 'Boys, we are here to learn from each other. We expect you to show us what is best in Mohammedan example, and we want to show you what is best in Christian example.' And that usually ends all argument."

Dr. Bliss has been called "the leading citizen of Syria," and "the best Christian friend the Mohammedan ever had." It is noteworthy that while he is a Christian, engaged in Christian work, many contributions to the monument to civilization which he has erected, came from men who bend the knee toward Mecca.

But the day after I talked with him and heard of his great plans for modernizing Syria and bringing into the lives of its natives a spark of ambition that seems to have been extinguished long ago, I took the railroad climb from the sea over the hills, whence came those mighty cedars sent by Hiram of Tyre for Solomon's Temple at Jerusalem, and before evening found myself comfortably installed at the suburban hotel in Baalbek.

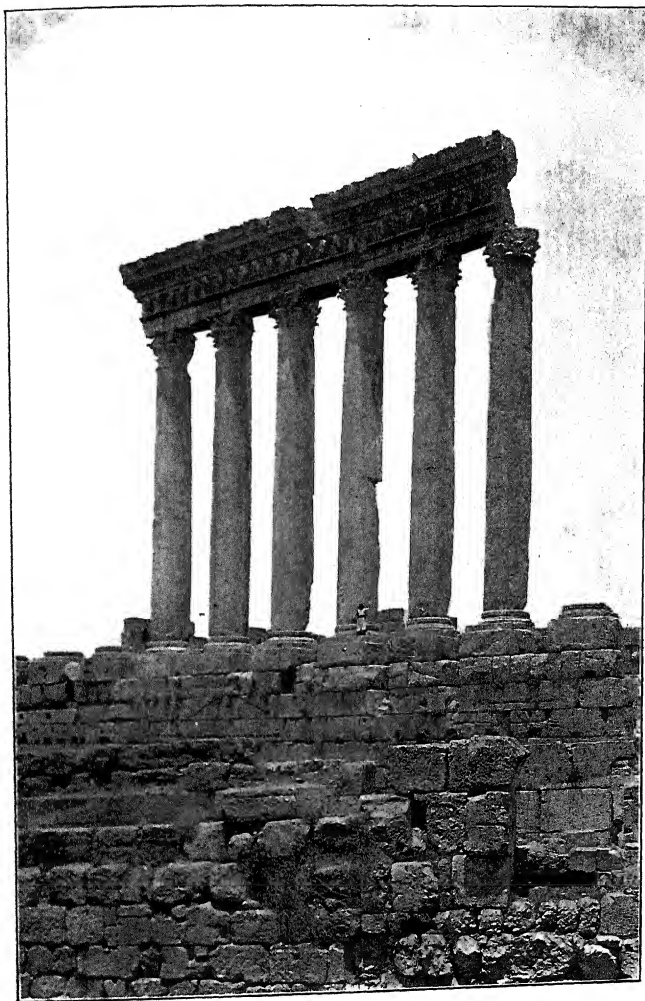
The typewriter hesitates as one attempts to

write of what awaits his wondering eyes soon after he has arrived at the little railway station that waves a sign bearing the ancient name in Arabic characters and English letters. According to the traditions, the ground upon which Baalbek was built is near to the home of Mr. and Mrs. Adam and Eve. At least the Arabs believed it when they conquered Syria, and they believe it still. They believe that Adam lived in the vicinity of Baalbek; that Abelyno, a near by town, was the scene of the murder of Abel by Cain, and that the latter actually laid the foundation of the antique city as a refuge after God had cursed him. Noah is buried in the vicinity, his son Shem at Ham, a town only three hours from Baalbek, and the bones of enough of the personages mentioned in the Book of Genesis are interred in the neighbourhood to make Baalbek one of the most-interesting places in the world.

But the proprietor of the little hotel that sits up on the Lebanon hills, the Villa Kaouam, "has been in America," as he informs his American guests when they arrive; and he does everything within his power to dispel all of the illusions that would give the city its greatest charm. He says he wants Americans to "feel at home," and he wants to correct the impression that "Baalbek

is off the earth," so far as good and modern accommodations are concerned. And because it was a little warm the following day he informed us that our meals would be served down by the spring in the open air. When I told him that I expected to spend a little time at my typewriter he promptly had that moved "down by the spring." So after hours of prowling around the pillars and columns of a remote antiquity, after marvelling at the tremendous stones that were set in place here by the ancients and still stand, defying all of the devices for moving known to modern man, we find ourselves "beside the spring," a wonderful stream of pure water that gushes forth from the Lebanon hills with the speed of water from a geyser. A grove of eucalyptus trees provides ample shade. At irregular intervals the proprietor sends down cool drinks from the hotel, mulberry juice or lemonade cooled by snow from Mount Hermon; and we are to blame for it if we are not comfortable. Our host at least does his best to make us "at home."

But Baalbek is a strange place and it produces strange emotions in the newcomer. No amount of comforts could relieve him of the musty spell that hangs over the place. Rome is called the Eternal City, but Rome is of mushroom growth



GIGANTIC PILLARS, TEMPLE OF JUPITER, BAALBEK.





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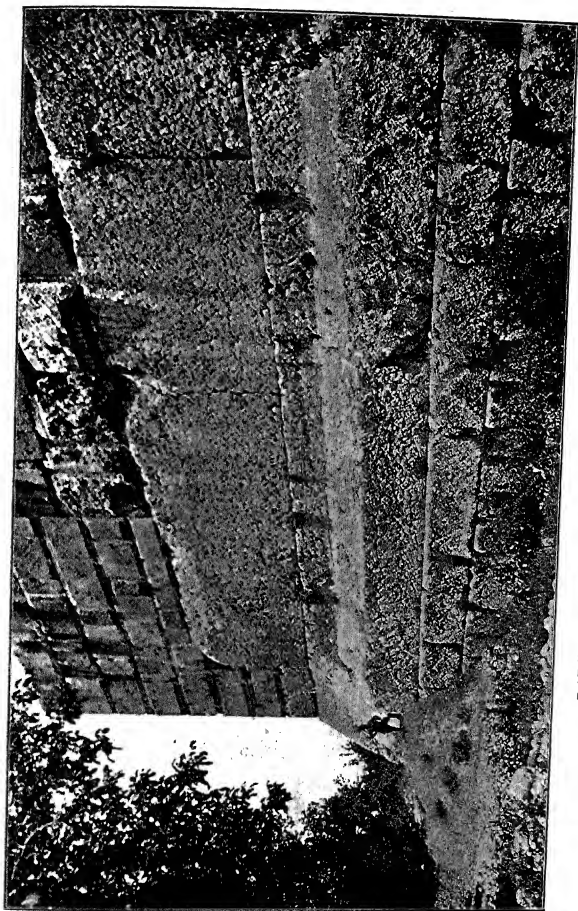
by comparison. The most ancient tablets found in Egypt refer to Baalbek. Thebes had some wonderful monuments to speak of that day when the city had a "hundred gates." But Thebes has passed to decay. Damascus may be older, as a city, but to-day the modern spirit pervades Damascus and there is little to forcibly remind one of the past. Baalbek's ruins ascend toward the sun by day, and by night seem to penetrate the sky with their colossal blocks of stone soaring cloudward, which no engine or mechanical contrivance of the present could budge an inch from the ground.

My first night at Baalbek was silvery with moonlight. I looked out from the balcony of the hotel and saw the six gigantic pillars of Jupiter's Temple. Try as I may, I am unable to free myself of the impressions created by the lace-work of ochre across a blue sky. Perhaps, as many scientists believe, "there were giants in those days"—men of mighty stature, perhaps the colossal animals of geological times were domesticated sufficiently to lend their strength to the rearing of these mighty works of stone, for such a theory is seriously projected by many of the scholars—but, at any rate, how puny is man to-day, by comparison. How vast were his works, and how ridiculous by comparison to

them has the creature man of to-day become.

Thus, I believe one who comes with an unprejudiced mind cannot be wholly happy in Baalbek. In other ancient cities he is lost in the maze of beauty which he beholds. But here everything is too stupendous for his feeble mind to grasp. To be sure, there is a little Oriental town called Baalbek to-day, and the railroad branch brings puffing locomotives and trainloads of excursionists from Damascus. The citizens of the little village feel a certain pride in the antiquity of the name and the location. But Baalbek is dead, and this town is only a little wart on the side of its face. Great Baalbek lies beyond on the hill and in the valley. Its suburbs may have stretched to the present site in the older and holier day, for one has but to scratch the ground with a pick or shovel anywhere in the neighbourhood to bring to light delicately carved blocks of marble, splendid friezes, granite basins, aqueducts and pillars.

Baalbek, the name of which sways in front of the little station on a very modern signboard, is a very puny little specimen of village, quite aptly compared to its ancestor as man of the present is compared to that giant who stalked over the same soil thousands of years ago and left monuments that not even time can cause to



LARGE STONES, TEMPLE OF JUPITER, BAALBEK.



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decay. It is believed that Nimrod "the mighty hunter" once ruled over this city where the son of the first man and woman "built an altar before the Lord." It is believed that Nimrod was the instigator in the erection of the Tower of Babel, which the Arabs believe was at Baalbek, and that the dryness of the surrounding territory results to this day from the curse which the Lord visited upon him and his people for their audacity.

An ancient Arab manuscript records the fact that after the flood Nimrod sent giants to rebuild the fortress of Baalbek, making it certain that people have believed from time immemorial that the ancient city antedates the inundation that swept the earth. Abraham once ruled here. Solomon built a fine castle on the hillside, and after his time the Phœnicians maintained a far earlier tradition that Baalbek was a holy city and must be known as such to the end of time.

Michel Alouf, the Syrian archæologist, with whom I was fortunate enough to spend a day within the temple area, declared to me that in his opinion there is no doubt that the colossal Temple of Jupiter stood upon the site of the Phœnician temple, that beneath this Phœnician temple doubtless lie the remains of an even

earlier structure. He believes that Baalbek was once a city of fully five hundred thousand inhabitants, that it was the centre of religion to the whole world, as Mecca is to-day to the Mohammedans; that the wealth of the world was expended upon its gigantic structures and that the world's finest craftsmen were sent here to contribute to its beautification. He believes that the town owed its prosperity to the vast concourses of people who made pilgrimages here, that it was the centre of all religions and beliefs, that temples and shrines were erected here to all of the gods of the heathen world.

Baalbek's ruins have been too frequently minutely described to require any detailed reference to them. The thing that impressed me most was "the half has not been told." The ruins are far more extensive and in a far better state of preservation than the routine articles in books of reference lead one to believe. One sees photographs of the six pillars of the Temple of Jupiter which remain standing, but it is difficult to realize the vast extent of the temple that was supported by fifty-four of these columns. It is difficult to realize that the high cornice was made of stones which approximate the size of the ordinary living-room, and that the carving upon them was as delicate as that upon the finest

cameo. There were lions' heads, grape-leaves and lace-like designs in which the separate hairs of the lion's mane were shown, the veins of the leaves, and some of the lace work was undercut so that it resembles a priceless wood carving. The columns are sixty-six feet in height and a little over seven feet in diameter, and while they are not monoliths, they are composed of three gigantic pieces of stone. But one may pause before these marvels before he has visited the outer walls of the temple; he is not likely to do so afterwards. The north and south walls are composed of nine stones only, each measuring thirty-three feet in length, fourteen feet in height and ten feet in breadth. And above these are three other blocks measuring sixty-four feet in length, fourteen feet in height and twelve feet in breadth. These mammoth cubes are not only raised high in air, but they are so perfectly matched that no cement is used between them and it would be impossible to insert a sheet of paper between them. Gazing at them one becomes lost. The human mind is not capable of thinking of how they were moved.

"It seems quite probable that the ancients had some engines of which we know nothing," said Alouf, when we approached the stones, "for

there is no machine that could move these blocks to-day."

But even these pale into insignificance as one leaves the temple and drives to the quarries near by, whence came the material for the gigantic structures. It is quite probable that the idea was to increase the size of the stones in every new layer of the temple hall. The largest one was hewn from the side of the mountain, moved several yards, but there reposes to this day. Nobody knows why it was not moved further, and nobody can guess how it was moved at all. Some writers have estimated that this stone is the size of eight ordinary American freight cars placed double in rows of four. This barely does it justice, I believe, for it appears to be the size of an ordinary American house. Its weight in tons is some tremendous figure and does not matter. How was it moved?

One turns away and believes that he has seen enough wonders for one day. But the guide has other plans. These are only a few of the glories of Baalbek. There is an entire valley honey-combed with tombs carved in the natural rock. There is the Temple of Venus, the Temple of Bacchus, and there are many other temples. After a while the earth seems full of massive temples and one grows dizzy.





TEMPLE OF BACCHUS, BAALBEK.



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Yet the conquering Arabs destroyed many of them to erect rude fortifications around the city, and the unworthy citizens of modern Baalbek have kept up the devastation. Primitive little structures of cement and stone, in which the people live, contain in their walls blocks of white marble so splendidly carved that they would be priceless jewels in the collection of any antiquarian or museum. It has not been necessary to do much carving in stone in this neighbourhood for thousands of years. The man who wanted finished material merely took what he wanted from a temple's wall or portico.

"And the work of excavation has scarcely been started," commented Alouf; "the earth is full of stone treasures, some of which may perhaps give up more of the history of the place than we have yet been able to learn. Our puny efforts at restoration are ridiculous. The German expedition that came here placed one capstone in place over the archway leading into the Temple of Bacchus. It is a comparatively small stone, but the expense of lifting it into its original position was six thousand dollars. At that rate, there is barely enough money on earth to restore Baalbek to its original splendour. There is little hope that this will be done at any time in the future but we may keep it from pass-

ing further from sight. For that reason we charge visitors an admission fee of one dollar a day to the temple area and the amount is used for excavation."

## CHAPTER XX

### THE OLDEST CITY

**I**N many ways we felt that we had followed the good Oriental custom of keeping the best until the last. At least we had reserved the oldest name on our itinerary for our last few days in the Holy Land, and, having done so, one would advise others to do likewise, thus fulfilling scriptural injunction in regard to "the first shall be last." Assuredly Damascus was the first among cities of the earth that remain cities. Some travellers have reported that they were disappointed in the modern city, but they could never have known its joys, which are numerous and varied. They could not have felt a life-long desire to visit a real Oriental city, one that has preserved its characteristics, despite the influx of Western tourists, a city far enough away from the coast to have retained a distinctiveness that becomes lost when foreign vessels approach the gateway every day and slowly but certainly sap away its individuality and make it like the rest of the world.

Damascus, robbed of its history, would still remain one of the most fascinating cities on earth. Here is a city that seems to have been built as an appropriate setting to its glorious present; there is the absolute knowledge of its glorious past; and they make a combination which the traveller from the West with the least drop of sentiment will thoroughly appreciate, because, if he be a well-seasoned traveller over the face of the earth, he will readily appreciate that one rarely halts at such a place. When most of the other great cities of the past, which now lie in heaps of debris, were building their temples and palaces, when life was just beginning in the great centres of the antique world, Damascus was old. It is believed to have been old when Baalbek became a city, although Baalbek, according to traditions, was founded by the son of Adam and Eve. But Baalbek's origin is unknown and is lost in the maze of the distant past. Damascus is certainly as old as the oldest patriarchs of the Old Testament, and it is likely that most of them visited it, for the name appears frequently in the Bible and it is likely that it is near to the "Cradle of the Human Race."

And to travellers who approach it as we did there is nothing remarkable about the thought of

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its antiquity. All is desert beyond. The big white hills stand parched and dry for many miles. Long before we reached it people came for many miles around and begged the engineer of the Mecca train to give them a little water for their cracked lips and dry tongues, as we stopped at the desert station. But before we reached the old city we viewed it from one of the dry hilltops. There it lay like a string of white pearls set in emerald, in the valley beneath us. Here there was water. Streams of pure and clear water come bubbling out of the rocks and go swirling around through the irrigation ditches of the valley, causing trees to grow to unusual heights, fruit to ripen as it does not elsewhere, and flowers to burst out upon every twig. It is not unlikely that the early wanderers over the desert who beheld these life-giving streams quickly made up their minds to stay there and build their city.

Damascus is the most Oriental city that we have seen in the Orient. Here, everything seems to be luxurious, and at least conforms to the popular Western idea of Oriental luxury. Nobody seems to be working, and the streets are full of loiterers from morning until night, all of them in Oriental garb that is made of all the colours of the rainbow. Far up the banks of the

cool river there are great poplar and willow trees which provide a dense shade, and beneath these are hundreds of great red and white striped and upholstered sofas and divans, upon which men lounge and smoke and drink coffee. The rest of the world may do the work; Damascus seems merely to be resting and enjoying itself. The city contains some of the most magnificent baths in the East, and when the male population is not smoking or drinking it seems to be lounging about the big white marble pedestals, wrapped in Turkish towels, smoking cigarettes, ordering cooling drinks from big, shining negro boys from Nubia and glancing over the Arabic newspapers that are spread out before them. There is no privacy to the Damascene bath. Big doors and windows open onto the main thoroughfares and pedestrians stop to look in at the picture of Roman luxury. Great fountains are splashing jets of water into marble basins, where gold-fish dart around the aquatic plants in the basins. Strong perfumes fill the air, for milord of Damascus is prodigal with attar of roses and the essence of sandalwood.

Here, at last, is the Orient! Here, the fabled Orient of the novelists and painters. Every one seems either to be very rich or very poor—and the latter either beg “in the name of Al-

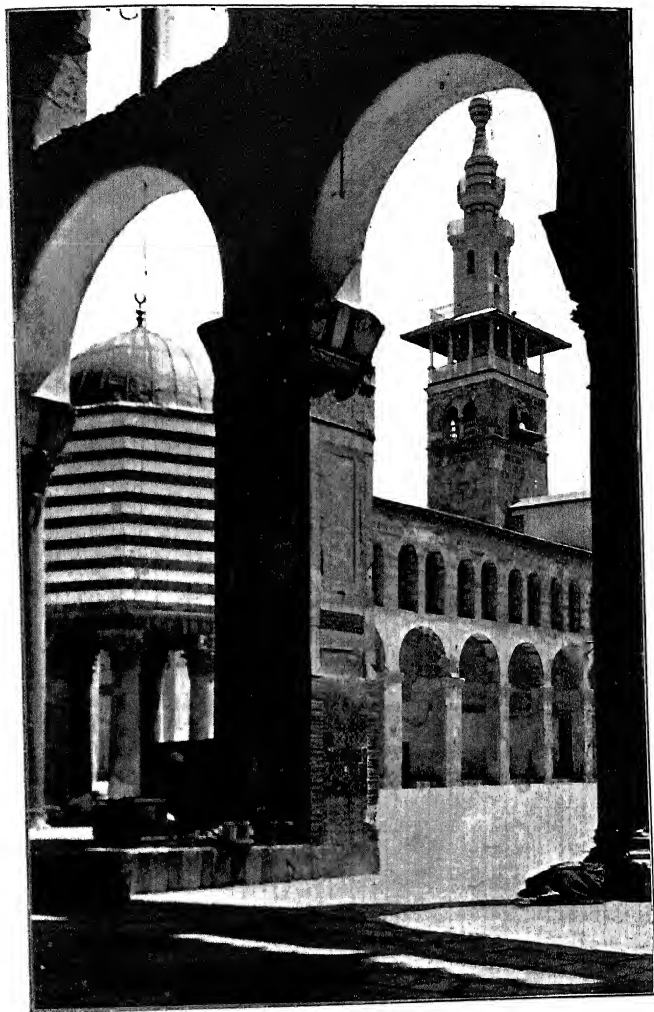


lah" or serve the rich. It seems to the stranger that Damascus is trying to be what Rome was in the day of its glory—and yet the comparison is absurd, for Damascus was an ancient city when Rome was born. The luxury that Rome learned was the luxury of the East. And Rome died, Athens died, and the far older cities of Egypt and Persia died. Damascus, alone, still survives in all of its old-time splendour. But it was not its ancient history that impressed me, as the history of other old cities of the East had done, so much as its amazing contradictions and its luxurious present. It takes one with a receptive mind to become serious over the various "points of interest" that are shown to him when he arrives here a stranger. Not far away is Noah's Tomb, and as one begins to believe that he is really to see the resting-place of the grand old admiral, the guide ruins it all by saying that Noah's body was one hundred and sixty-five feet long, so large in fact that he wouldn't go into the big grave that had been dug for him, so they were obliged to bend his knees downward into a pit, so that he would "fit his grave."

One goes to the splendid old Mosque of Omaiade, one of the most sacred places on earth to the Mohammedan, views its magnificent mosaics and pillars and is about to believe that here is a

place without "traditions" that destroy. But the guide leads the stranger to a magnificent marble tomb that reaches near to the dome of the mosque. Inside there is a splendid sarcophagus surrounded by splendid bronze grilles. "Here reposes the head of John the Baptist," says the guide, and as this is the fourth place in which the head of John the Baptist reposes, according to the various guides we have had in Egypt, Syria and Palestine, we must be forgiven if we doubt the authenticity of at least three of them. One day we drove to the wall, "where St. Paul was let down in a basket by night" (Acts ix:25), but we learn that a spot several miles distant was formerly pointed out to visitors as the exact one, but because it was found to be more convenient to visit this one, the site was changed.

Not absolutely reliable and authentic, perhaps, some of these sights and sites, but there is enough to compensate for one's disappointment when he hears the record and the controversies, centuries old, upon the same subjects. At least this is Damascus. No theorist doubts that, and few arise with the claim that any city has a more ancient history and still remains a city. It is mentioned in Assyrian inscriptions, and may have been in existence when civilization was



INTERIOR OF THE MOSQUE OF OMAIYADE, DAMASCUS.



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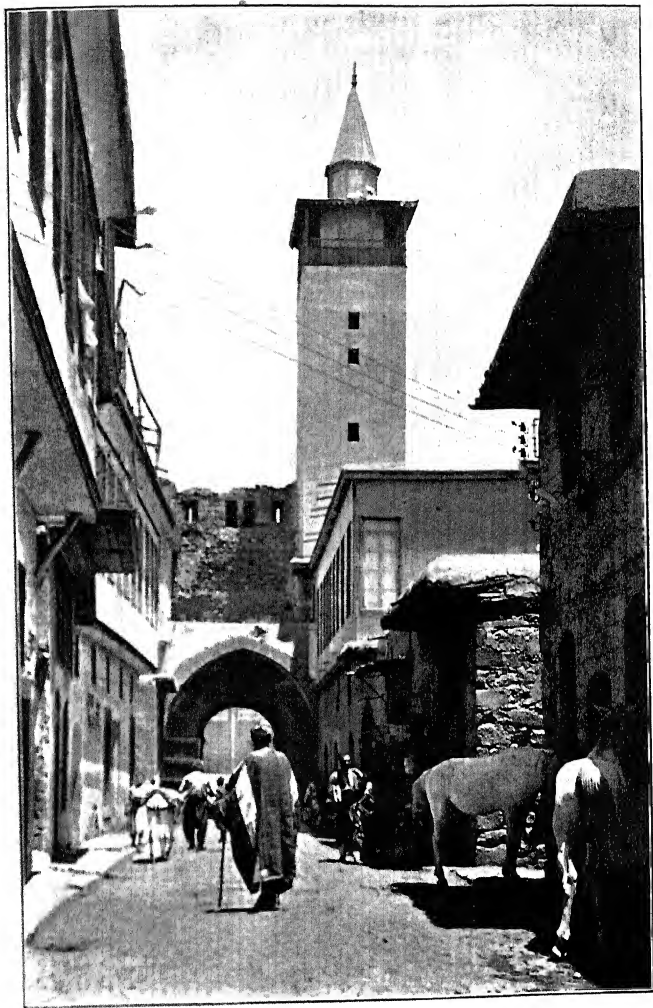
dawning in Egypt. Abraham's steward was Eliezer of Damascus, and it is likely that the city was visited by the patriarch himself. It was the home of Naaman, the Syrian, who was told by Elijah to go wash in Jordan, although he seemed to prefer the Pharpar. Here dwelt some of the earliest converts to the Christian church, and when on his way to Damascus, Saul of Tarsus had a vision and became a leader in the new religion. Here was Saladin and here is his tomb. The Mongols under Tamerlane almost destroyed it, but Damascus survived the attack upon it, as it has survived all others. Here, at last, is apparently an eternal city. Mankind of all ages seems to have demanded a city in its beautiful location.

On Friday, as chance would have it, we visited the Mohammedan burial ground, where the family of Mahomet is interred. Here lies Fatima, the daughter of the Prophet, who gave her name to all the Oriental dancers who ventured into the West during the centuries that have passed since her time, and who is now best remembered by a brand of cigarettes. It is just possible that the remains of the Mahomet family are in reality here, and we believed that at last we would see something which was "actual." But as we began to prowl around the tomb there was a great

outcry. We had stepped on some of the holy prayer rugs with our "Christian dog shoes" and the women who come here to mourn on Friday made an uproar. They sounded like a pack of wolves, as they screamed and prostrated themselves. We did not know what was the matter because we did not understand their Arabic screeches, but a dozen or so men entered the tomb in response to the outcry, our guide hustled us toward the entrance and we made a quick retreat to the carriage, leaving our dragoman to explain that we "did not know" about the sanctity of the rugs.

Damascus is still fanatical to an amazing degree, but frightened. We remembered the massacre of 1860, when Christians were butchered by the Mohammedans, before the French troops taught the people a lesson which they do not forget. But it is a smouldering flame, held in check only by the government. Damascus is a metropolis and is not so isolated as cities like Nablus in Palestine, else it would be as unsafe for Christians to venture into its streets without guards.

"The Street Called Straight," one of the two streets mentioned in the Bible, doubtless remains about as it was in Bible times. Mark Twain, to make another cheap pun, as he did so



“ THE STREET CALLED STRAIGHT,” DAMASCUS.





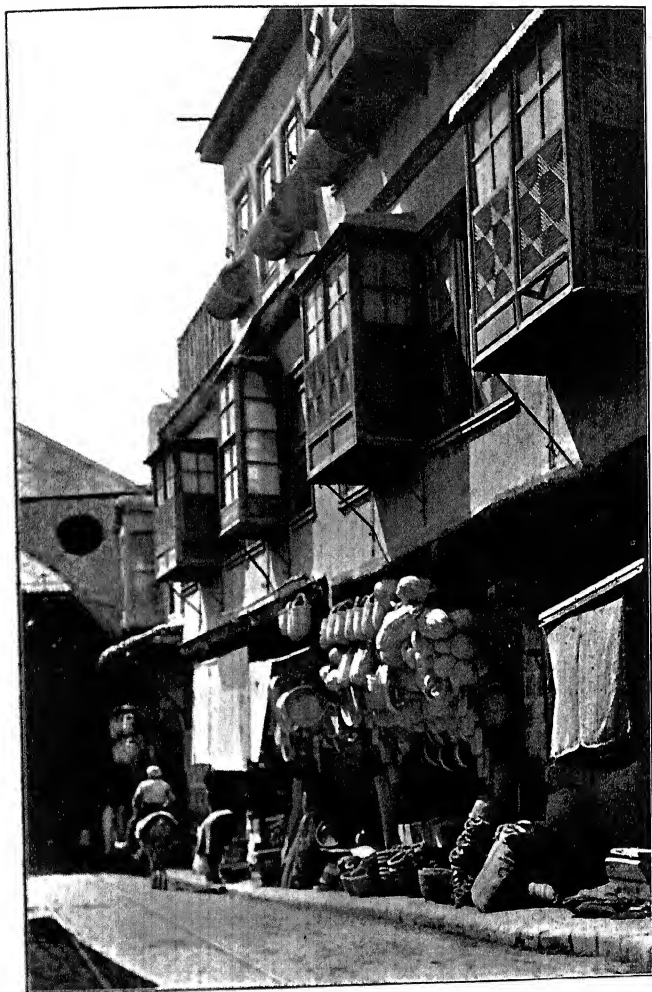
frequently in the East, said that it was called straight because it was so crooked. But it is straight, as Oriental streets go, and it is an interesting thoroughfare, largely occupied by Christians and Jews, many of whom are engaged in the manufacture of hammered brass work and furniture inlaid with mother-of-pearl. We visited one of the largest of these shops, and found that all of the beautiful things of commerce which are sent to the ends of the earth are made by children of unbelievable youth. We saw little tots of four or five years, sitting wearily at their benches, hammering with a mallet and chisel on designs that had been traced by their elders. The majority of them would not be old enough to enter the graded schools at home. We came to one little fellow of about five years who had actually gone to sleep with his mallet and chisel in hand. The foreman, who showed us through the factory, jerked his arm and shouted something that startled him and he began to hammer again.

"They get six cents a day, sunrise until sunset," said the foreman, "and it's good pay for them. If they didn't get it, they might starve, for their fathers and mothers don't make much more and can't buy food for them."

But likely as not, father was squatting some-

where on a red sofa, beside the cool river, sipping his coffee, smoking a narghile and exchanging the gossip of the day with his neighbours.

Damascus is a city of splendid bazars, which are not rivalled in the East excepting at Constantinople. Many of them are just the same narrow, filthy streets that one sees in all Oriental cities, little shops two yards wide at the entrance, with tradesmen offering for sale every conceivable object under the sun. But there are also finer streets, which are much like great arcades. They are stone structures that extend the whole length of the street. Here are the carpet dealers, the curio dealers, gold and silversmiths, who, with crude and primitive instruments, make some of the finest jewelry in the world. Some of them, in dingy little shops, displayed to us great chests of precious stones, necklaces, bracelets and pins. They catch what tourist trade they can, but depend chiefly upon the agents of the big wholesale firms of the world, who come to Damascus twice a year to make their purchases. But the keepers of stalls do not seem to care whether they make sales or not. They sit in the entrance, smoking, reading, or half asleep, from nine until noon. Then they pull the door shut and sleep, or go home and sleep until two or three in the afternoon.



STREET SCENE, DAMASCUS.



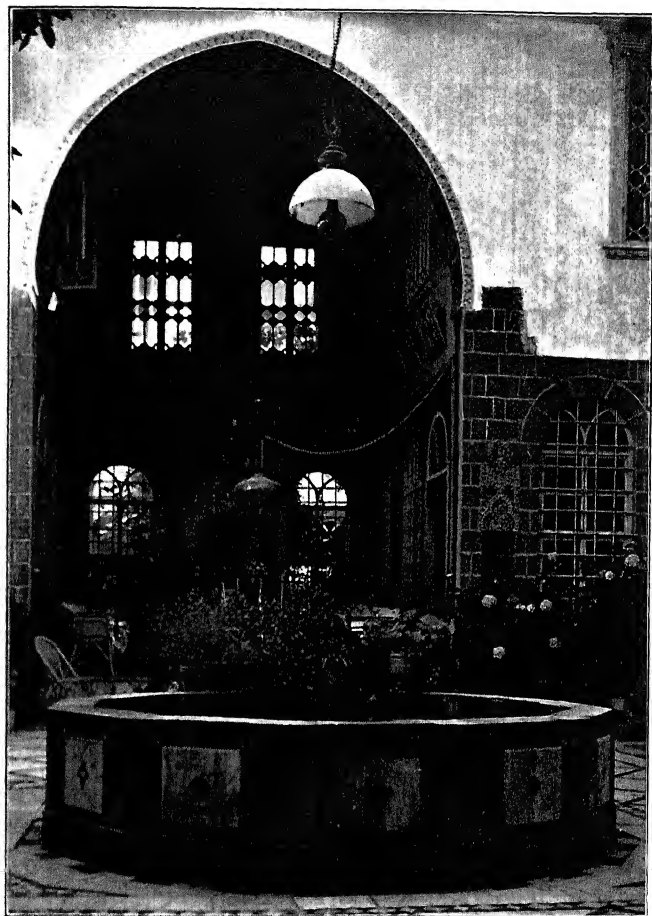
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By six o'clock the streets in the bazars are deserted. On Friday many of them are not open at all, because it is the Mohammedan Sabbath. On Saturday many of them do not open because it is the Jewish Sabbath. On Sunday most of them "respect" the Christian Sabbath and remain closed, not so much on account of their "respect" but because they want a holiday.

They visit their favourite baths in the forenoon. Then they wander along the banks of the Abana (II Kings, v: 12) and, sitting down, enjoy a drink and smoke. Or they retire to their homes, for Damascus is a city of palatial homes. The houses have great courtyards where big fountains splash in marble basins, surrounded by orange trees and jasmine vines. Damascus of the past is lost in myth and legend. Damascus of the present is lost in dreams, perfume, tobacco smoke and ariake, a white concoction that tastes like absinthe.

As I sought for the most characteristic thing about Damascus it seemed natural to look in the brass bazars, but as I strolled along these places and visited the various manufactories, it seemed that, after all, the rest of the world has copied the Damascene product so closely that it would be difficult for any one but a specialist to detect the foreign article. And practically the same

thing was true of the furniture shops where the mother-of-pearl inlaid work is produced. But this, too, and even the anciently famous "Damascus swords," may be found in almost any European or American city. So I continued my hunt for the genuine novelty. For a while I paused in the street where apricots are pressed into large, thin sheets, resembling a yellowish-red leather. This at least seemed to be "characteristic" of Damascus. A dealer explained to me that the crop is so heavy in Damascus that it cannot be taken care of or shipped in anything like prime condition, so the fruit is boiled into a pulp, sweetened, rolled out into thin layers and shipped to all parts of the world. "Yes, America consumes a large amount of the product that goes out from Damascus," he explained in answer to my question, but after I had seen the dirty youngsters in his employ tugging the layers of "confection" in the dust of the streets, and folding it up on the filthy stone pavements, before placing it in big wooden boxes for shipment, I decided to look still further for a novelty. One thinks less of the Damascene apricot layers after having seen the manner in which they are prepared just as he thinks less of macaroni and spaghetti after he has passed along the streets of Torre del Greco and seen the starchy



INTERIOR OF A DAMASCUS HOME.





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stuff drying in the dirty alleys and streets of that "macaroni metropolis."

Finally I found what I wanted. Damascus is the great centre of the rug trade of the world. Constantinople does a bigger business, on account of its closer proximity to Europe, making it more convenient for the buyers of the world to gather there twice each year to make their purchases; but Constantinople buys of Damascus, and here many of the choicest specimens remain. Hither come the connoisseurs and collectors from all over Christendom. The dingy little hole in the wall of a Damascus bazar sometimes houses a collection of rugs worth more than the entire stock in a great department store in America. Damascus is the terminus of the Mohammedan El Hajaz railway running to Mecca. The pilgrims from Bokhara and Persia bring their treasures with them for the sacred pilgrimage. And the Damascene dealers lie in wait for them, or follow them far down the line. Thus Damascus gets the real treasures—and Damascus keeps most of them until they are sold to the retail trade or collectors.

So I looked up Nessim Mizrahi, a dealer well known to some of the big rug collectors of the world, a man who can scent a Persian pilgrim

with a fine rug as a hound scents a fox, and a man who will not give up the chase, even if he be obliged to go to the gates of Mecca itself before convincing a pilgrim that his old prayer rug is not of enough value to be carried around in one's luggage. Mizrahi spread out some recently purchased treasures before me. He handled them tenderly, as one might caress a kitten. He admitted that he loved them, and that if he could afford to keep them he would never let one of them pass from his possession. "But it's fate," he remarked. "I am a dealer and my business is to sell my rugs at a profit, but why is it, I wonder, that the collectors and dealers who come here and buy of me always take the rugs that I would most like to keep? But collectors are usually shrewd men. It isn't like collecting anything else in the world. Every good rug in the world is constantly increasing in value. The wise man, and the man who can afford to do so, will keep rugs for fifteen or twenty years. I believe rugs are among the best purely commercial investments in the world. Other things fluctuate or decrease in value as they become older. Not so, rugs. A tattered old thing that barely hangs together is sometimes priceless, and any amount of wear does not cause a rug to depreciate in value."

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“Where are the best rugs in the world at the present time?” I asked.

“Without a doubt, in Persia—that is, not counting some of the rare specimens that have been brought from Persia and now repose in the collections of American and European millionaires. And it is exceedingly difficult to get hold of these Persian rugs. We have to wait until we see them in the possession of the pilgrims bound for Mecca.”

“But why all of this expense and suspense? Why not make a trip to Persia and collect them there?”

“Impossible. The supply is not plentiful even in Persia, and the really rare specimens are to be found in the most unexpected places. It isn't the new rugs that we want; it's the old ones. You can't very well go into a stranger's house and tell him that if you see anything you want, you'd like to buy it. He would be suspicious in a minute and decline to show his possessions. Sometimes we find a pilgrim with a rug that is worn to the warp, but if it is of a design that we want we do not hesitate to pay him a fabulous price—and, remember, that we, like the retailers, have to pay higher prices than formerly. What is it you call it in America? The Persians are becoming 'wise.' They

are beginning to know the value of their rugs and sometimes they will not let them go at any price. But, as I said before, buying rugs—if one knows a real one—is a better investment than putting money in the bank. Why, a few years ago I sold an American a prayer rug for \$2,500, and to-day it is worth \$10,000. I could cite many similar instances.”

“How do you get the pilgrims to give you their rugs at all?”

“The best way generally is to give them a new one for an old one; but even this is difficult, for they are connoisseurs and know a valuable piece when they see it. I believe that this method is honest, for a new rug is worth more to them than an old one—particularly if they are on the way to Mecca and can take it there. They do not have the opportunity that we have to meet collectors. But it takes many days of bargaining sometimes. I go to El Ma'an, just over the border in Arabia, which is the last station on the Mecca railroad that an infidel may approach, and sit around the station for days at a time before I get what I desire.”

“You prefer to sell to collectors?”

“On the contrary, I have done quite a business in buying up old frayed out things that barely hung together. These are valuable prin-

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cipally to the manufacturers, who want the ancient designs. Sometimes they'll pay \$250 for one of these things merely to use it as a copy."

"How much time does it take to make the ordinary Persian rug? We read thrilling tales about where whole families have worked on a rug for an entire generation."

He held up a small prayer rug about a yard long and half a yard wide. "A rug like this would take three people about six months to make. I believe that from six months to two years is the usual time consumed. Those stories about whole families working for years are greatly exaggerated, unless they refer to very large rugs, intricate in design. But the principal thing is that the workmanship on the Persian rugs of to-day is not so good as formerly. The work is done principally by women and children to-day, and one of these days I believe that certain varieties will be absolutely impossible to purchase. In the older day the Persians were more isolated and couldn't buy their wool or silk from Europe, so they used only the finest quality that could be purchased at home. Now they get cheaper grades, and consequently the texture of the work they turn out is not so fine. Another thing—there has been and will continue to be a veritable exodus from Persia; and among

.

these people are many of the older rug weavers who have gone into other trades. One of these days we'll find that no more rugs of value at all are to be found in Persia. Then there will be a boom in prices—and this boom seems already to have begun—and prices will rise to undreamed of heights. Wise and fortunate will be the collector who has a good supply on hand."

The Occidental can barely appreciate how a rug suddenly rises in value after it has made the pilgrimage to Mecca. Sometimes a grandfather of the family made the pilgrimage and brought back the little piece of carpet on which he had knelt before the Kaaba, or black stone in the sacred city. At once it is hung upon the wall and becomes one of the family heirlooms. Perhaps the son took the same rug when he went to Mecca and when he returned it became doubly precious. Or if he took another rug that was hung beside the older one in the drawing-room for his children and children's children to cherish. An ancient Egyptian considered it the worst sacrilege in the world to borrow money with the mummy of his ancestors as bond for payment. The Mohammedan considers his prayer rugs in much the same light—thus it is apparent how difficult it

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is to induce fanatical devotees to part with anything so dear to them and their families, unless they are driven to the extremity by hunger and absolute need.

I have been in Mohammedan homes where at least seven of these rugs were hung on the walls. There were no other ornaments, but these were considered sufficient. I was permitted to enter one of the palatial residences of Damascus. A very rich man had built it, closely following the design of one of the Sultan's palaces at Constantinople. Then he lost his money and died from the shock. The widow still lives there, penniless but proud. From the outside it looks much like an old livery stable or blacksmith shop at home. One enters a battered old door from the street and goes through a dark alleyway. But here, suddenly, the visitor finds himself in a large, white marble courtyard. There is a big white marble basin, fully twenty feet in diameter, but no water is splashing, because there is no money to pay the water rent. Around the courtyard are orange trees, and lean dogs are lying on the white tiles in the shade. There are spacious apartments of coloured stones, some of them richly carved. There are a few old sofas and divans, but most of the furniture has been sold to pay debts.

The widow lives in a tiny apartment, waited upon by an old black serving woman, who was with her in days of prosperity. We could see them peeping from behind the lattice work as we walked around the beautiful, or once beautiful, apartments opening on the courtyard. Everything was gone, all the apartments stripped of their furnishings but the wall decorations in the drawing-room. This room was built entirely of white marble with walls and ceilings of the same material. There were big white marble sofa frames on which bright cushions once rested. On the wall there was an enlarged photograph of the departed husband and near it four prayer rugs. He had taken them with him on his pilgrimage to Mecca, and they are his widow's most prized possession. She will let the furniture go—perhaps even her palace itself must go under the auctioneer's hammer; but the rugs she will suspend on less expensive and smaller walls, when she is finally ejected from her home. But she will not sell them. Her daughter married a Mohammedan in Cairo, and when the mother is through with them, the rugs will be sent to the Egyptian city and hung in a place of honour in the daughter's house.

And to the uninitiated, to one who does not



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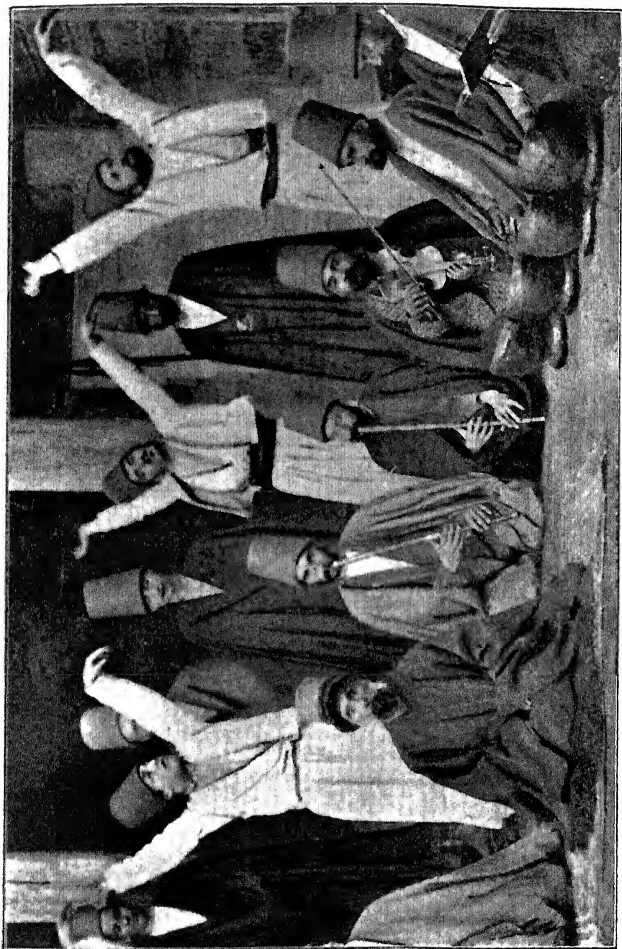
know the value that is placed upon these things by dealers and collectors, many of the rare treasures look like the things that are offered "marked down to ninety-eight cents" in the American department stores. But that's the catch. These are the originals, the parents of the designs which modern rug makers have copied. The originals are almost priceless, while the imitations can be made in thousand-lots at a dollar a piece. And so on and on.

At Damascus one chats with the rug dealer to-day and to-morrow he may wander into the bazars and listen to a discourse from the jeweller or seller of precious stones, for some of those dingy coops along the narrow highways contain chests of rare handiwork, some of which seem to be close imitations of the ornaments plundered from Egyptian tombs. One stops before some tiny shop where the turbanned merchant seems to be reading a book, but in reality he is awaiting purchasers. He has ancient bronze camel bells and gorgeous saddle-bags or other trappings for sale. Oh, he can spin a romantic yarn about the little bell that he holds before his prospective customer! It has the soft, mellow chime of antique bronze. He declares that he knows the chef de caravan who bought it from an old man of Bagdad. For scores of

years, and perhaps for over a century, it has chimed its way across the desert. Many times it has been to Palmyra and made soft music near the home of Zenobia.

The next day one goes back to the Tomb of Fatima or feels himself drawn toward that stately Mosque of the Omayyade or goes to watch the whirling dervishes, or some of the other wonders of the place.

Damascus entwines itself about the heart of the stranger who comes within its ancient gates in a receptive mood, and willing to be charmed, particularly the traveller who knows that his Oriental days and wanderings to ancient or holy shrines are almost to an end. "Old age for reflection." The tourist takes a carriage and drives far beyond the city along the roadway that follows the Abana River, or, if he has been caught by the Oriental spell, he walks, always a more commendable method of getting deeper into the heart of things. One stops at any of the endless cafés beside the sparkling stream and climbs to one of the big red and white sofas beneath the cool shade of trees. Always the Damascenes are there ahead of him, and they will be there when he is gone, smoking narghiles and drinking innumerable cups of sweet black coffee. One almost imagines that these care-



WHIRLING DERVISHES, DAMASCUS.



free brown brothers have solved the riddle of life. They are happy in their indolence and know and care nothing of that new world of work and bustle of which they have heard vague whisperings. For those hurrying, curious tourists who come this way they entertain a lofty disdain; for they cannot understand a philosophy that prompts men to spend their lives under the lash of ambition. They are supremely happy and superbly self-centred and satisfied with things as they are. Let the new world do the experimenting, Damascus emerged from this chrysalis centuries ago and now gives to her sons an inheritance of ancient wisdom or ignorance. Who may say which? Certainly not the thoughtless stranger who takes a glance to-day and departs to-morrow.

Dear, musty, old Damascus! From my perch on a sofa beside the Abana I puffed a pipe, nibbled at four varieties of luscious apricots, sipped coffee and looked down on white-roofed domes and lace-work minarets of stone as I reflected the recent past and thought of my departure on the morrow towards a distant land. A pleasant memory, those chiming bells of Jerusalem! A pleasant memory those bypaths that led me to Bethlehem, Gethsemane, through the Judean wilderness and Galilean hills! It is long past

meridian. The monks of Mar Saba are assembling for prayers in their retreat among the crags beyond Jehoshaphat. A Turkish soldier saunters past on a beautiful white Arab horse. The natives of old Jericho are sweltering in the deathly atmosphere beside the Dead Sea. The Jordan is swirling around muddy bends in the river. Birds flutter in the tree-tops overhead. It is almost time for the priest of Mahomet to call his children to prayers. A black boy continues to fill the coffee cup with dark brown syrup-like fluid. A shrill pipe and the tom-toms reveal the joy of a party of youths from the city. One becomes intoxicated in the restful lap of the Orient, one feels the spell of the Holy Land, and dreams only of what has been and is, with no thought of what is soon to be.

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